THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND,

OR A

SUPPLEMENT TO THE ART OF LOGIC.

IN TWO PARTS.

BY

ISAAC WATTS, D. D.

ALSO HIS

POSTHUMOUS WORKS.

Published from his Manuscript

BY

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ADVERTISEMENT.

"FEW books have been perused by me with greater pleasure than his *Improvement of the Mind*, of which the radical principles may indeed be found in Locke's *Conduct of the Understanding*; but they are so expanded and ramified by *Watts*, as to confer on him the merit of a work in the highest degree useful and pleasing. Whoever has the care of instructing others, may be charged with deficience in his duty if this book is not recommended."

Dr. Johnson's Life of Dr. Watts.

THE

PREFACE.

IN the laſt page of the Treatiſe of Logic which I publiſhed many years ago, it is obſerved, that there are ſeveral other things which might aſſiſt the cultivation of the mind, and its improvement in knowledge, which are not uſually repreſented among the principles or precepts of that art or ſcience. Theſe are the ſubjects which compoſe this book; theſe are the ſentiments and rules, many of which I had then in view, and which I now venture into public light.

The preſent treatiſe, if it may aſſume the honour of that name, is made up of a variety of remarks and directions for the improvement of the mind in uſeful knowledge. It was collected from the obſervations which I had made on my own ſtudies, and on the temper and ſentiments, the humour and conduct of other men in their purſuit of learning, or in the affairs of life; and it has been conſiderably aſſiſted by occaſional collections in the courſe of my reading, from many authors and on different ſubjects. I confeſs, in far the greateſt part, I ſtand bound to anſwer for the weakneſſes or defects that will be found in theſe papers, not being able to point to other writers, whence the twentieth part of them is derived.

The work was compoſed at different times, and by ſlow degrees. Now and then, indeed, it ſpread itſelf into branches and leaves like a plant in April, and advanced ſeven or eight pages in a week; and ſometimes it lay by without growth, like a vegetable in the winter, and did not increaſe half ſo much in the revolution of a year.

As theſe thoughts occurred to me in reading or meditation, or in my notices of the various appearances

of things among mankind, they were thrown under thoſe heads which make the preſent titles of the chapters, and were by degrees reduced to ſomething like a method, ſuch as the ſubject would admit.

On theſe accounts it is not to be expected that the ſame accurate order ſhould be obſerved either in the whole book, or in the particular chapters thereof, which is neceſſary in the ſyſtem of any ſcience, whoſe ſcheme is projected at once. A book which has been twenty years a-writing, may be indulged in ſome variety of ſtyle and manner, though I hope there will not be found any great difference of ſentiment; for wherein I had improved in later years beyond what I had firſt written, a few daſhes and alterations have corrected the miſtakes: and if the candour of the reader will but allow what is defective in one place, to be ſupplied by additions from another, I hope there will be found a ſufficient reconciliation of what might ſeem at firſt to be ſcarcely conſiſtent.

The language and dreſs of theſe ſentiments is ſuch as the preſent temper of mind dictated, whether it were grave or pleaſant, ſevere or ſmiling. If there has been any thing expreſſed with too much ſeverity, I ſuſpect it will be found to fall upon thoſe ſneering or daring writers of the age againſt religion, and againſt the Chriſtian ſcheme, who ſeemed to have left reaſon, or decency, or both, behind them in ſome of their writings.

The ſame apology of the length of years in compoſing this book, may ſerve alſo to excuſe a repetition of the ſame ſentiments which may happen to be found in different places without the author's deſign; but in other pages it was intended, ſo that thoſe rules for the conduct of the underſtanding which are moſt neceſſary, ſhould be ſet in ſeveral lights, that they might with more frequency and more force impreſs the ſoul. I ſhall be ſufficiently ſatisfied with the good humour and le-

nity of my readers, if they will pleaſe to regard theſe papers as parcels of imperfect ſketches, which were deſigned by a ſudden pencil, and in a thouſand leiſure moments, to be one day collected into landſkips of ſome little proſpects in the regions of learning, and in the world of common life, pointing out the faireſt and moſt fruitful ſpots, as well as the rocks and wilderneſſes, and faithleſs moraſſes of the country. But I feel age advancing upon me, and my health is inſufficient to perfect what I had deſigned, to increaſe and amplify theſe remarks, to confirm and improve theſe rules, and to illuminate the ſeveral pages with a richer and more beautiful variety of examples. The ſubject is almoſt endleſs, and new writers in the preſent and in following ages may ſtill find ſufficient follies, weakneſſes, and dangers among mankind, to be repreſented in ſuch a manner as to guard youth againſt them.

Theſe hints, ſuch as they are, I hope may be rendered ſome way uſeful to perſons in younger years, who will favour them with a peruſal, and who would ſeek the cultivation of their own underſtandings in the early days of life. Perhaps they may find ſomething here which may awake a latent genius, and direct the ſtudies of a willing mind. Perhaps it may point out to a ſtudent now and then, what may employ the moſt uſeful labours of his thoughts, and accelerate his diligence in the moſt momentous inquiries. Perhaps a ſprightly youth may here meet with ſomething to guard or warn him againſt miſtakes, and withhold him at other times from thoſe purſuits which are like to be fruitleſs and diſappointing.

Let it be obſerved alſo, that in our age ſeveral of the ladies purſue ſcience with ſucceſs; and others of them are deſirous of improving their reaſon even in common affairs of life, as well as the men: yet the characters which are here drawn occaſionally, are almoſt univerſally applied to one ſex; but if any of the

other ſhall find a character which ſuits them, they may, by a ſmall change of the termination, apply and aſſume it to themſelves, and accept the inſtruction, the admonition, or the applauſe which is deſigned in it.

There is yet another thing which it is neceſſary my reader ſhould be informed of; but whether he will call it fortunate or unhappy, I know not. It is ſufficiently evident that the book conſiſts of two parts: the firſt lays down remarks and rules how we may attain uſeful knowledge ourſelves; and the ſecond, how we may beſt communicate it to others. Theſe were both deſigned to be printed in this volume: but a manuſcript which hath been near twenty years in hand, may be eaſily ſuppoſed to allow of ſuch difference in the handwriting, ſo many lines altered, ſo many things interlined, and ſo many paragraphs and pages here and there inſerted, that it was not eaſy to compute the number of ſheets that it would make in print: and it now appears, that the remarks and rules about the communication of knowledge being excluded here, they muſt be left to another volume; wherein will be contained various obſervations relating to methods of inſtruction, the ſtyle and manner of it, the way of convincing other perſons, of guarding youth againſt prejudices, of treating and managing the prejudices of men, of the uſe and abuſe of authority, of education, and of the various things in which children and youth ſhould be inſtructed, of their proper buſineſs and diverſions, and of the degrees of liberty and reſtraint therein, *&c.* Of all which I had once deſigned a more complete treatiſe; but my years advancing, I now deſpair to finiſh it.

The eſſays or chapters on theſe ſubjects being already written, if I am favoured with a tolerable degree of health, will be put to the preſs, when the favourable acceptance of this *firſt part* ſhall give ſufficient encouragement to proceed.

CONTENTS.

PART FIRST.

DIRECTIONS FOR THE ATTAINMENT OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

	Page
INTRODUCTION,	1
Chap. I. General Rules for the Improvement of Knowledge,	4
Chap. II. Obſervation, Reading, Inſtruction by Lectures, Converſation, and Study compared,	19
Chap. III. Rules relating to Obſervation,	31
Chap. IV. Of Reading of Books,	38
Chap. V. Judgment of Books,	49
Chap. VI. Of living Inſtructions and Lectures, of Teachers and Learners,	62
Chap. VII. Of learning a Language,	66
Chap. VIII. Of inquiring into the Senſe and Meaning of any Writer or Speaker, and eſpecially the Senſe of the ſacred Writings,	75
Chap. IX. Rules of Improvement by Converſation,	79
Chap. X. Of Diſputes,	94
Chap. XI. The Socratical Way of Diſputation,	107
Chap. XII. Of Forenſic Diſputes,	110
Chap. XIII. Of Academic or Scholaſtic Diſputation,	112
Chap. XIV. Of Study, or Meditation,	122
Chap. XV. Of fixing the Attention,	134
Chap. XVI. Of enlarging the Capacity of the Mind,	137

Page
Chap. XVII. Of improving the Memory, 155
Chap. XVIII. Of determining a Queſtion, 178
Chap. XIX. Of inquiring into Cauſes and Effects, - - - 196
Chap. XX. Of the Sciences, and their Uſe in particular Profeſſions, - - 200

PART SECOND.

COMMUNICATION OF USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

PREFACE, - - - 233
Introduction, - - 235
Chap. I. Methods of teaching and reading Lectures, - - - 236
Chap. II. Of an inſtructive Style, - 243
Chap. III. Of convincing other Perſons of any Truth; or delivering them from Errors and Miſtakes, - - - 248
Chap. IV. Of Authority, of the Abuſe of it, and of its real and proper Uſe and Service, 256
Chap. V. Of treating and managing the Prejudices of Men, - - 266
Chap VI. Of Inſtruction by Preaching, 275
Sect. I. Wiſdom better than Learning in the Pulpit, - - - *ib.*
Sect. II. A branching Sermon, - 281
Sect. III. The Harangue, - 282
Chap. VII. Of writing Books for the Public, 288
Chap. VIII. Of writing and reading Controverſies, - - - - 293
Sect. I. Of writing Controverſies, - *ib.*
Sect. II. Of reading Controverſies, - 295

A DISCOURSE

ON THE EDUCATION OF YOUTH.

Page

Introduction, - - 301
Sect. I. Of inſtructing Children in Religion, 304
Sect. II. The Exerciſe and Improvement of their natural Powers, - - 306
Sect. III. Self-government, - 316
Sect. IV. The common Arts of Reading and Writing, - - 323
Sect. V. Of a Trade or Employment, - 326
Sect. VI. Rules of Prudence, - 330
Sect. VII. The Ornaments and Accompliſhments of Life, - - 333
Sect. VIII. A Guard againſt evil Influences from Perſons and Things, - 342
Sect. IX. A Guard ſet on the Sports and Diverſions of Children, - - 346
Sect. X. Of the proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of a Son, illuſtrated by Example, - - - 364
Sect. XI. Of the proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of Daughters, illuſtrated by Examples, - - 379

REMNANTS OF TIME,

EMPLOYED IN PROSE AND VERSE.

I. Juſtice and Grace, - - 391
II. The Death of a young Son, - 394
III. Heathen Poeſy Chriſtianized, - 396
IV. Redemption, - - 398
V. Complaint and Hope under great Pain, 400

Page

VI. On an Elegy, written by the Right Honourable the Counteſs of Hertford, on the Death of Mrs. Rowe, - - 401
VII. Dr. Young's admirable Deſcription of the Peacock enlarged, - - *ib.*
VIII. Vanity inſcribed on all Things, - 402
IX. The Rake reformed in the Houſe of Mourning, - - - - 406
X. Thou haſt received Gifts for Men, 414
XI. The Gift of the Spirit, - 417
XII. The Day of Grace, - 419
XIII. God and Nature unſearchable, - 420
XIV. The Diamond painted, - 423
XV. Bills of Exchange, - - 425
XVI. The Saints unknown in this World, 428
XVII. Praiſe waiteth for thee, O God, in Zion, 432
XVIII. O that I knew where I might find him, 436
XIX. The Figure of a Cherub, - 442

THE

IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART FIRST.

CONTAINING A VARIETY OF

REMARKS AND RULES

FOR THE

Attainment and Communication of Useful Knowledge,
in Religion, in the Sciences, and
in common Life.

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THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART I.

Directions for the Attainment of uſeful Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION.

NO man is obliged to learn and know every thing; this can neither be ſought nor required, for it is utterly impoſſible: yet all perſons are under ſome obligation *to improve their own underſtanding*, otherwiſe it will be a barren deſart, or a foreſt overgrown with weeds and brambles. Univerſal ignorance or infinite errors will overſpread the mind, which is utterly neglected and lies without any cultivation.

Skill in the ſciences is indeed the buſineſs and profeſſion but of a ſmall part of mankind; but there are many others placed in ſuch an exalted rank in the world, as allows them much leiſure and large opportunities to cultivate their reaſon, and to beautify and enrich their minds with various knowledge. Even the lower orders of men have particular callings in life, wherein they ought to acquire a juſt degree of ſkill, and this is not to be done well without thinking and *reaſoning* about them.

The common duties and benefits of ſociety, which belong to every man living, as we are ſocial creatures, and even our native and neceſſary relations to a family, a neighbourhood, or a government, oblige all perſons whatſoever to uſe their *reaſoning powers* upon a thouſand occaſions; every hour of life calls for ſome regular exerciſe of our judgment as to times and things, perſons and actions; without a prudent and diſcreet determination in matters before us, we ſhall be plunged into perpetual errors in our conduct. Now that which ſhould always be practiſed, muſt at ſome time be learnt.

Beſides, every ſon and daughter of *Adam* has a moſt important concern in the affairs of a life to come, and therefore it is a matter of the higheſt moment for every one to underſtand, to judge, and to reaſon right about the things of religion. It is in vain for any to ſay, *we have no leiſure or time for it.* The daily intervals of time, and vacancies from neceſſary labour, together with the one day in ſeven in the *Chriſtian* world, allows ſufficient time for this, if men would but apply themſelves to it with half as much zeal and diligence as they do to the trifles and amuſements of this life; and it would turn to infinitely better account.

Thus it appears to be the neceſſary duty and the intereſt of every perſon living to *improve his underſtanding*, to *inform his judgment*, to *treaſure up uſeful knowledge*, and to *acquire the ſkill of good reaſoning*, as far as his ſtation, capacity, and circumſtances furniſh him with proper means for it. Our miſtakes in judgment may plunge us into much folly and guilt in practice. By acting without thought or reaſon, we diſhonour the *God* that made us reaſonable creatures, we often become injurious to our *neighbours, kindred, or friends*, and we bring ſin and miſery upon *ourſelves*: For we are accountable to God our judge for every part of our irregular and miſtaken conduct, where he hath given us ſufficient advantages to guard againſt thoſe miſtakes.

It is the deſign of *Logic* to give this improvement to the mind, and to teach us the *right uſe of reaſon in the acquirement and communication of all uſeful knowledge:*

though the greateſt part of writers on that ſubject have turned it into a compoſition of hard words, trifles, and ſubtilties for the mere uſe of the ſchools, and that only to amuſe the minds and the ears of men with empty ſounds, which flatter their vanity, and puff up their pride with a pompous and glittering ſhew of falſe learning: and thus they have perverted the great and valuable deſign of that ſcience.

A few modern writers have endeavoured to recover the honour of *Logic*, ſince that excellent author of the *Art of Thinking* led the way: Among the reſt I have preſumed to make an attempt of the ſame kind, in a treatiſe publiſhed ſeveral years ago, wherein it was my conſtant aim to aſſiſt the reaſoning powers of every rank and order of men, as well as to keep an eye to the beſt intereſt of the ſchools and the candidates of true learning. There I have endeavoured to ſhew the *miſtakes* we are expoſed to in our *conception*, *judgment*, and *reaſoning*; and pointed to the various *ſprings* of them. I have alſo laid down many *general and particular rules* how to eſcape error, and attain truth in matters of the civil and religious life, as well as in the ſciences.

But there are ſeveral other *obſervations* very pertinent to this purpoſe, which have not fallen ſo directly under any of thoſe heads of diſcourſe, or at leaſt they would have ſwelled that treatiſe to an improper ſize; and therefore I have made a diſtinct collection of them here out of various authors, as well as from my own obſervation, and ſet them down under the following heads.

The learned world who has done ſo much unmerited honour to that *logical* treatiſe, as to receive it into our two flouriſhing univerſities, may poſſibly admit this as a *ſecond part* or *ſupplement* to that treatiſe. And I may venture to perſuade myſelf, that if the common and the buſy ranks of mankind, as well as the ſcholar and the gentleman, would but tranſcribe ſuch rules into their underſtanding, and practiſe them upon all occaſions, there would be much more *truth* and *knowledge* found among men; and it is reaſonable to hope that *juſtice*, *virtue*, and *goodneſs* would attend as the happy conſequents.

CHAP. I.

General Rules for the Improvement of KNOWLEDGE *.

I. RULE.

DEEPLY poſſeſs your mind with the *vaſt importance of a good judgment*, and the rich and ineſtimable advantage of *right reaſoning*. Review the inſtances of your own miſconduct in life; think ſeriouſly with yourſelves how many follies and ſorrows you had eſcaped, and how much guilt and miſery you had prevented, if from your early years you had but taken due pains to judge aright concerning perſons, times, and things. This will awaken you with lively vigour to addreſs yourſelves to the work of improving your reaſoning powers, and ſeizing every opportunity and advantage for that end.

II. *Rule.* CONSIDER *the weakneſſes, frailties, and miſtakes of human nature* in general, which ariſe from the very *conſtitution of a ſoul united to an animal body*, and ſubjected to many inconveniencies thereby. Conſider the many additional weakneſſes, miſtakes, and frailties which are derived from our *original apoſtacy and fall from a ſtate of innocence*; how much our powers of underſtanding are yet more darkened, enfeebled, and impoſed upon by our ſenſes, our fancies, and our unruly paſſions, *&c.* Conſider the *depth and difficulty of many truths*, and the *flattering appearances of falſehood*, whence ariſes an infinite variety of dangers to which we are expoſed in our judgment of things. Read with greedineſs thoſe authors that treat of the doctrine of *preju-*

* Though the moſt of theſe following rules are chiefly addreſſed to thoſe whom their fortune or their ſtation require to addict themſelves to the peculiar improvement of their minds in greater degrees of knowledge, yet every one who has leiſure and opportunity to be acquainted with ſuch writings as theſe, may find ſomething among them for their own uſe.

dices, *prepoſſeſſions*, and *ſprings* of error, on purpoſe to make your ſoul watchful on all ſides, that it ſuffer not itſelf as far as poſſible to be impoſed upon by any of them. *See* more on this ſubject, *Logic*, Part II. Chap. 3. and Part III. Chap. 3.

III. *Rule.* A SLIGHT view of things ſo momentous is not ſufficient. You ſhould therefore contrive and practiſe ſome *proper methods to acquaint yourſelf with your own ignorance*, and to impreſs your mind with a deep and painful ſenſe of the low and imperfect degrees of your preſent knowledge, that you may be incited with labour and activity to purſue after greater meaſures. Among others you may find ſome ſuch *methods* as theſe ſucceſsful.

1. Take a wide ſurvey now and then of the vaſt and unlimited regions of learning. Let your meditations run over the names of all the ſciences, with their numerous branchings, and innumerable particular themes of knowledge; and then reflect how few of them you are acquainted with in any tolerable degree. The moſt learned of mortals will never find occaſion to act over again what is fabled of *Alexander the Great*, that when he had conquered what was called the *Eaſtern World*, he wept for want of more worlds to conquer. The worlds of ſcience are immenſe and endleſs.

2. Think what a numberleſs *variety of queſtions* and *difficulties* there are belonging even to that *particular ſcience*, in which you have made the greateſt progreſs, and how few of them there are in which you have arrived at a final and undoubted certainty; excepting only thoſe queſtions in the pure and *ſimple mathematics*, whoſe theorems are demonſtrable and leave ſcarcely any doubt; and yet even in the purſuit of ſome few of theſe, mankind have been ſtrangely bewildered.

3. Spend a few thoughts ſometimes on the puzzling inquiries concerning *vacuums* and *atoms*, the *doctrine of infinites*, *indiviſibles*, and *incommenſurables* in geometry, wherein there appear ſome inſolvable difficulties: Do this on purpoſe to give you a more ſenſible impreſſion of the poverty of your underſtanding, and the impor-

fection of your knowledge. This will teach you what a vain thing it is to fancy that you know all things; and will inſtruct you to think modeſtly of your preſent attainments, when every *duſt of the earth* and every *inch of empty ſpace* ſurmounts your underſtanding and triumphs over your preſumption. *Arithmo* had been bred up to accounts all his life, and thought himſelf a complete maſter of *numbers*. But when he was puſhed hard to give the ſquare root of the number 2, he tried at it, and laboured long in milleſimal fractions, until he confeſſed there was no end of the inquiry; and yet he learnt ſo much modeſty by this perplexing queſtion, that he was afraid to ſay, *it was an impoſſible thing*. It is ſome good degree of improvement when we are afraid to be poſitive.

4. Read the accounts of thoſe *vaſt treaſures of knowledge*, which ſome of the *dead* have poſſeſſed, and ſome of the *living* do poſſeſs. Read and be aſtoniſhed at the almoſt incredible advances which have been made in ſcience. Acquaint yourſelves with ſome *perſons of great learning*, that by converſe among them, and comparing yourſelves with them, you may acquire a mean opinion of your own attainments, and may be thereby animated with new zeal, to equal them as far as poſſible, or to exceed: thus let your diligence be quickened by a generous and laudable emulation. If *Vanillus* had never met with *Scitario* and *Polydes*, he had never imagined himſelf a mere novice in Philoſophy, nor ever ſet himſelf to ſtudy in good earneſt.

Remember this, that if upon ſome few ſuperficial acquirements you value, exalt, and ſwell yourſelf as though you were a *man of learning* already, you are thereby building a moſt unpaſſable barrier againſt all improvement; you will lie down and indulge idleneſs, and reſt yourſelf contented in the midſt of deep and ſhameful ignorance. *Multi ad ſcientiam perveniſſent ſi ſe illuc perveniſſe non putaſſent.*

IV. *Rule.* PRESUME not too much upon a *bright genius*, a *ready wit*, and *good parts*, for this without labour and ſtudy will never make a man of knowledge

and wiſdom. This has been an unhappy temptation to perſons of a vigorous and gay fancy, to deſpiſe learning and ſtudy. They have been acknowledged to ſhine in an aſſembly, and ſparkle in diſcourſe upon common topics, and thence they took it into their heads to abandon reading and labour, and grow old in ignorance; but when they had loſt the vivacities of animal nature and youth, they became ſtupid and ſottiſh even to contempt and ridicule. *Lucidas* and *Scintillo* are young men of this ſtamp: they ſhine in converſation, they ſpread their native riches before the ignorant; they pride themſelves in their own lively images of fancy, and imagine themſelves wiſe and learned; but they had beſt avoid the *preſence of the ſkilful* and the *teſt of reaſoning*; and I would adviſe them once a-day to think forward a little, what a contemptible figure they will make in age.

The witty men ſometimes have ſenſe enough to know their own *foible*, and therefore they craftily ſhun the attacks of argument, or boldly pretend to deſpiſe and renounce them; becauſe they are conſcious of their own ignorance, and inwardly confeſs their want of acquaintance with the *ſkill of reaſoning*.

V. *Rule.* As you are not to fancy yourſelf a *learned man* becauſe you are bleſſed with a *ready wit*, ſo neither muſt you imagine that *large and laborious reading*, and a *ſtrong memory*, can denominate you *truly wiſe*.

What that excellent critic has determined when he decided the queſtion, whether wit or ſtudy makes the beſt poet, may well be applied to every ſort of learning——

——*Ego nec ſtudium ſine divite vena*
Ne crude quid proſit, video, ingenium: alterius ſic
Altera poſcit opem res, et conjurat amice.

Hor. de Art. Poet.

Thus made Engliſh:

Concerning *poets* there has been conteſt,
Whether they're made by *art*, or *nature* beſt;

But if I may preſume in this affair,
Among the reſt my judgment to declare,
No *art* without a genius will avail,
And *parts* without the help of *art* will fail:
But both ingredients jointly muſt unite,
Or verſe will never ſhine with a tranſcendent light.

OLDHAM.

It is meditation and ſtudious thought, it is the exerciſe of your own reaſon and judgment upon all you read, that gives good ſenſe even to the beſt genius, and affords your underſtanding the trueſt improvement. A boy of ſtrong memory may repeat a whole book of *Euclid*, yet be no *Geometrician*; for he may not be able perhaps to demonſtrate one ſingle theorem. *Memorino* has learnt half the bible by heart, and is become a living concordance and a ſpeaking index to theological folios, and yet he underſtands little of divinity.

A well furniſhed library and a capacious memory, are indeed of ſingular uſe toward the improvement of the mind; but if all your learning be nothing elſe but a mere amaſſment of what others have written, without a due penetration into their meaning, and without a judicious choice and determination of your own ſentiments, I do not ſee what title your *head* has to true learning above your *ſhelves*. Though you have read *Philoſophy* and *Theology*, *Morals* and *Metaphyſics* in abundance, and every other art and ſcience, yet if your *memory* is the only faculty employed, with the neglect of your *reaſoning powers*, you can juſtly claim no higher character but that of a *good hiſtorian of the ſciences*.

Here *note*, Many of the *foregoing advices* are more peculiarly proper for thoſe who are conceited of their abilities, and are ready to entertain a high opinion of themſelves. But a modeſt humble youth of a good genius, ſhould not ſuffer himſelf to be diſcouraged by any of theſe conſiderations. They are deſigned only as a ſpur to diligence, and a guard againſt vanity and pride.

VI. *Rule.* Be not ſo weak as to imagine that a *life of learning* is a *life of lazineſs and eaſe*: dare not give up yourſelf to any of the learned profeſſions unleſs you are reſolved to *labour hard at ſtudy*, and can make it your delight and the joy of your life, according to the motto of our late Lord Chancellor *King*,

Labor ipſe voluptas.

It is no idle thing to be a *ſcholar indeed*. A man much addicted to luxury and pleaſure, recreation and paſtime, ſhould never pretend to devote himſelf entirely to the ſciences, unleſs his ſoul be ſo reformed and refined that he can taſte all theſe entertainments eminently in his cloſet, among his books and papers. *Sobrino* is a temperate man and a philoſopher, and he feeds upon partridge and pheaſant, veniſon and ragouts, and every delicacy, in a growing underſtanding, and a ſerene and healthy ſoul, though he dines on a diſh of ſprouts or turnips. *Languinos* loved his eaſe, and therefore choſe to be brought up a ſcholar; he had much indolence in his temper, and as he never cared for ſtudy, he falls under univerſal contempt in his profeſſion, becauſe he has nothing but the gown and the name.

VII. Let the hope of new diſcoveries, as well as the ſatisfaction and pleaſure of known truths, animate your daily induſtry. *Do not think learning in general is arrived at its perfection*, or that the knowledge of any particular ſubject in any ſcience cannot be improved, merely becauſe it has lain five hundred or a thouſand years without improvement. The preſent age, by the bleſſing of God on the ingenuity and diligence of men, has brought to light ſuch truths in natural philoſophy, and ſuch diſcoveries in the heavens and the earth, as ſeemed to be beyond the reach of man. But may not there be Sir *Iſaac Newtons* in every ſcience? You ſhould never deſpair therefore of finding out that which has never yet been found, unleſs you ſee ſomething in the nature of it which renders it unſearchable, and above the reach of our faculties.

Nor ſhould a ſtudent in divinity imagine that our age is arrived at a full underſtanding of every thing which can be known by the ſcriptures. Every age ſince the reformation hath thrown ſome further light on difficult texts and paragraphs of the bible, which have been long obſcured by the early riſe of antichriſt: and ſince there are at preſent many difficulties, and darkneſſes hanging about certain truths of the Chriſtian Religion, and ſince ſeveral of theſe relate to important doctrines, ſuch as the *Origin of Sin*, the *Fall of Adam*, the *Perſon of Chriſt*, the *Bleſſed Trinity*, and the *Decrees of God*, &c. which do ſtill embarraſs the minds of honeſt and inquiring readers, and which make work for noiſy controverſy: it is certain there are ſeveral things in the bible yet unknown and not ſufficiently explained, and it is certain that there is ſome way to ſolve theſe difficulties, and to reconcile theſe ſeeming contradictions. And why may not a ſincere ſearcher of truth in the preſent age, by labour, diligence, ſtudy, and prayer, with the beſt uſe of his reaſoning powers, find out the proper ſolution of thoſe knots and perplexities which have hitherto been unſolved, and which have afforded matter for angry quarrelling? Happy is every man who ſhall be favoured of heaven to give a helping hand towards that introduction of the bleſſed age of light and love.

VIII. *DO not hover always on the ſurface of things*, nor take up ſuddenly with mere appearances; but penetrate into the depth of matters, as far as your time and circumſtances allow, eſpecially in thoſe things which relate to your own profeſſion. Do not indulge yourſelves to judge of things by the firſt glimpſe, or a ſhort and ſuperficial view of them; for this will fill the mind with errors and prejudices, and give it a wrong turn and ill habit of thinking, and make much work for retraction. *Subito* is carried away with title-pages, ſo that he ventures to pronounce upon a large *octavo* at once, and to recommend it wonderfully when he had read half the Preface. Another volume of controverſies of equal ſize, was diſcarded by him at once, be-

cauſe it pretended to treat of the *Trinity*, and yet he could neither find the word *eſſence* nor *ſubſiſtencies* in the 12 firſt pages: but *Subito* changes his opinions of men and books and things ſo often, that nobody regards him.

As for thoſe ſciences, or thoſe parts of knowledge, which either your profeſſion, your leiſure, your inclination, or your incapacity, forbid you to purſue with much application, or to ſearch far into them, you muſt be contented with an *hiſtorical* and *ſuperficial knowledge* of them, and not pretend to form many judgments of your own on thoſe ſubjects which you underſtand very imperfectly.

IX. ONCE a-day, eſpecially in the early years of life and ſtudy, *call yourſelves to an account what new ideas, what new propoſition or truth you have gained, what further confirmation of known truths, and what advances you have made in any part of knowledge;* and let no day if poſſible paſs away without ſome intellectual gain: ſuch a courſe well purſued, muſt certainly advance us in uſeful knowledge. It is a wiſe proverb among the learned, borrowed from the lips and practice of a celebrated painter, *nulla dies ſine linea;* let no day paſs without one line at leaſt: and it was a ſacred rule among the *Pythagoreans*, that they ſhould every evening thrice run over the actions and affairs of the day, and examine what their conduct hath been, what they had done, or what they have neglected; and they aſſured their pupils, that by this method they would make a noble progreſs in the path of virtue.

Μηδ' υπνον μαλακοισιν επ' ομμασι προσδεξασθαι
Πριν των ημερινων εργων τρις εκαστον επελθειν.
Πη παρεβην; τι δ' ερεξα; τι μοι δεον ουκ επελεσθη;
Ταυτα σε της θειης αρετης εις ιχνια θησει.

Nor let ſoft ſlumber cloſe your eyes
Before you've recollected thrice
The train of actions through the day:
Where have my feet choſe out the way?

What have I learnt, where'er I've been,
From all I've heard, from all I've ſeen?
What know I more that's worth the knowing?
What have I done that's worth the doing?
What have I ſought that I ſhould ſhun?
What duty have I left undone;
Or into what new follies run?
Theſe ſelf-inquiries are the road
That leads to virtue and to God.

I would be glad among a nation of *Chriſtians*, to find young men heartily engaged in the practice of what this *heathen* writer teaches.

X. MAINTAIN a conſtant watch at all times againſt a *dogmatical ſpirit*: fix not your aſſent to any propoſition in a firm and unalterable manner, till you have ſome firm and unalterable ground for it, and till you have arrived at ſome clear and ſure evidence; till you have turned the propoſition on all ſides, and ſearched the matter through and through, ſo that you cannot be miſtaken. And even where you may think you have full grounds of aſſurance, be not too early, nor too frequent in expreſſing this aſſurance in too peremptory and poſitive a manner, remembering that human nature is always liable to miſtake in this corrupt and feeble ſtate. A *dogmatical ſpirit* has many inconveniencies attending it: as,

1. *It ſtops the ear againſt all further reaſoning* upon that ſubject, and ſhuts up the mind from all farther improvements of knowledge. If you have reſolutely fixed your opinion, though it be upon too ſlight and inſufficient grounds, yet you will ſtand determined to renounce the ſtrongeſt reaſon brought for the contrary opinion, and grow obſtinate againſt the force of the cleareſt argument. *Poſitivo* is a man of this character, and has often pronounced his aſſurance of the *Carteſian* vortexes: laſt year ſome further light broke in upon his underſtanding, with uncontrollable force, by reading ſomething of mathematical philoſophy; yet having aſſerted his former opinions in a moſt confident man-

ner, he is tempted now to wink a little againſt the truth, or to prevaricate in his diſcourſe upon that ſubject, leſt by admitting conviction, he ſhould expoſe himſelf to the neceſſity of confeſſing his former folly and miſtake; and he has not humility enough for that.

2. A *dogmatical ſpirit* naturally leads us to *arrogance of mind*, and gives a man ſome airs in converſation, which are too haughty and aſſuming. *Audens* is a man of learning, and very good company, but his infallible aſſurance renders his carriage ſometimes inſupportable.

3. A *dogmatical ſpirit* inclines a man to be *cenſorious of his neighbours*. Every one of his opinions appears to him written as it were with ſun-beams, and he grows angry that his neighbour does not ſee it in the ſame light. He is tempted to diſdain his correſpondents as men of a low and dark underſtanding, becauſe they will not believe what he does. *Furio* goes farther in this wild track, and charges thoſe who refuſe his notions, with wilful obſtinacy and vile hypocriſy; he tells them boldly, that they reſiſt the truth, and ſin againſt their conſciences.

Theſe are the men, that, when they deal in controverſy, delight in reproaches. They abound in toſſing about *abſurdity* and *ſtupidity* among their brethren: They caſt the imputation of *hereſy* and *nonſenſe* plentifully upon their antagoniſts; and in matters of ſacred importance, they deal out their *anathemas* in abundance upon Chriſtians better than themſelves; they denounce damnation upon their neighbours without either juſtice or mercy, and when they pronounce ſentences of divine wrath againſt ſuppoſed heretics, they add their own human fire and indignation. A dogmatiſt in religion is not a great way off from a bigot, and is in high danger of growing up to be a bloody perſecutor.

XI. Though caution and ſlow aſſent will guard you againſt frequent miſtakes and retractions, yet you ſhould *get humility and courage enough to retract any miſtake, and confeſs an error*: frequent changes are tokens of levity, in our firſt determinations; yet you ſhould

never be too proud to change your opinion, nor frighted at the name of a *changeling*. Learn to ſcorn thoſe vulgar *bugbears* which confirm fooliſh man in his old miſtakes, for fear of being charged with inconſtancy. I confeſs it is better not to judge, than to judge falſely, and it is wiſer to with-hold our aſſent till we ſee complete evidence; but if we have too ſuddenly given our aſſent, as the wiſeſt man does ſometimes, if we have profeſſed what we find afterwards to be falſe, we ſhould never be aſhamed nor afraid to renounce a miſtake. That is a noble eſſay which is found among the *Occaſional Papers*, to encourage the world to practiſe *retractions*; and I would recommend it to the peruſal of every ſcholar and every Chriſtian.

XII. He that would raiſe his judgment above the vulgar rank of mankind, and learn to paſs a juſt ſentence on perſons and things, muſt *take heed of a fanciful temper of mind, and a humorous conduct in his affairs*. Fancy and humour early and conſtantly indulged, may expect an old age over-run with follies.

The notion of a *humoriſt* is, one that is greatly pleaſed or greatly diſpleaſed with little things, who ſets his heart much upon matters of very ſmall importance, who has his will determined every day by trifles, his actions ſeldom directed by the reaſon and nature of things, and his paſſions frequently raiſed by things of little moment. Where this practice is allowed, it will inſenſibly warp the judgment to pronounce little things great, and tempt you to lay a great weight upon them. In ſhort, this temper will incline you to paſs an unjuſt value on almoſt every thing that occurs; and every ſtep that you take in this path is juſt ſo far out of the way to wiſdom.

XIII. For the ſame reaſon *have a care of trifling with things important and momentous*, or of *ſporting with things awful and ſacred*: do not indulge a ſpirit of ridicule, as ſome witty men do on all occaſions and ſubjects. This will as unhappily bias the judgment on the other ſide, and incline you to paſs a low eſteem on the moſt valuable objects. Whatſoever evil habit we indulge in practice,

it will inſenſibly obtain a power over our underſtanding, and betray us into many errors. *Jocander* is ready with his jeſt to anſwer every thing that he hears; he reads books in the ſame jovial humour, and has got the art of turning every thought and ſentence into merriment. How many awkward and irregular judgments does this man paſs upon ſolemn ſubjects, even when he deſigns to be grave and in earneſt? His mirth and laughing humour is formed into habit and temper, and leads his underſtanding ſhamefully aſtray. You will ſee him wandering in purſuit of a gay flying feather, and he is drawn by a ſort of *ignis fatuus* into bogs and mire almoſt every day of his life.

XIV. EVER *maintain a virtuous and pious frame of ſpirit;* for an indulgence of vicious inclinations debaſes the underſtanding and perverts the judgment. *Whoredom and wine and new wine, take away the heart* and ſoul and reaſon of a man. Senſuality ruins the better faculties of the mind: an indulgence to appetite and paſſion enfeebles the powers of reaſon, it makes the judgment weak and ſuſceptive of every falſehood, and eſpecially of ſuch miſtakes as have a tendency towards the gratification of the animal; and it warps the ſoul aſide ſtrangely from that ſtedfaſt honeſty and integrity that neceſſarily belongs to the purſuit of truth. It is the virtuous man who is in a fair way to wiſdom. "God gives to thoſe that are good in his ſight, wiſ-"dom, and knowledge, and joy," *Eccl.* ii. 26.

Piety towards God, as well as ſobriety and virtue, are neceſſary qualifications to make a truly wiſe and judicious man. He that abandons religion muſt act in ſuch a contradiction to his own conſcience and beſt judgment, that he abuſes and ſpoils the faculty itſelf. It is thus in the nature of things, and it is thus by the righteous judgment of God: even the pretended ſages among the *heathens, who did not like to retain God in their knowledge, they were given up to a reprobate mind,* εις νον αδοκιμον, an undiſtinguiſhing or injudicious mind, ſo that they judged inconſiſtently, and practiſed mere abſurdities, τα μη ανηκοντα, Rom. i. 28.

And it is the character of the ſlaves to *Antichriſt*, 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 10. *&c.* that thoſe "who receive not the "love of the truth, were expoſed to the *power of dia-* "*bolical ſleights and* lying wonders." When divine revelation ſhines and blazes in the face of men with glorious evidence, and they wink their eyes againſt it, the God of this world is ſuffered to blind them even in the moſt obvious, common, and ſenſible things. The great God of heaven for this cauſe, *ſends them ſtrong deluſions that they ſhould believe a lie*; and the nonſenſe of *tranſubſtantiation* in the *popiſh world* is a moſt glaring accompliſhment of this prophecy, beyond ever what could have been thought of or expected among creatures who pretend to reaſon.

XV. *WATCH againſt the pride of your own reaſon*, and a vain conceit of your intellectual powers, with the neglect of divine aid and bleſſing. Preſume not upon great attainments in knowledge by your own ſelf-ſufficiency: thoſe who *truſt to their own underſtanding* entirely, are pronounced *fools* in the word of God: and it is the wiſeſt of men gives them this character, "he "that truſteth in his own heart is a fool," *Prov.* xxviii. 26. And the ſame divine writer adviſes us to "truſt in the Lord with all our heart, and not to lean "to our own underſtandings, nor to be wiſe in our "own eyes," *Chap.* iii. 5, 7.

Thoſe who, with a neglect of religion, and dependence upon God, apply themſelves to ſearch out every article in the things of God by the mere dint of their own reaſon, have been ſuffered to run into wild exceſſes of foolery, and ſtrange extravagance of opinions. Every one who purſues this vain courſe, and will not aſk for the conduct of God in the ſtudy of religion, has juſt reaſon to fear he ſhall be left of God, and given up a prey to a thouſand prejudices: that he ſhall be conſigned over to the follies of his own heart, and purſue his own temporal and eternal ruin. And even in common ſtudies, we ſhould by humility and dependence engage the God of truth on our ſide.

XVI. Offer up therefore your *daily requeſts to God the Father of lights*, that he would bleſs all your attempts and labours in reading, ſtudy, and converſation. Think with yourſelf, how eaſily and how inſenſibly, by one turn of thought, he can lead you into a large ſcene of uſeful ideas: he can teach you to lay hold on a clew which may guide your thoughts with ſafety and eaſe through all the difficulties of an intricate ſubject. Think how eaſily the Author of your beings can direct your motions by his providence, ſo that the glance of an eye, or a word ſtriking the ear, or a ſudden turn of the fancy, ſhall conduct you to a train of happy ſentiments. By his ſecret and ſupreme method of government he can draw you to read ſuch a treatiſe, or to converſe with ſuch a perſon who may give you more light into ſome deep ſubject in an hour, than you could obtain by a month of your own ſolitary labour.

Think with yourſelf, with how much eaſe the God of ſpirits can caſt into your mind ſome uſeful ſuggeſtion, and give a happy turn to your own thoughts, or the thoughts of thoſe with whom you converſe, whence you may derive unſpeakable light and ſatisfaction in a matter that has long puzzled and entangled you: he can ſhew you a "path which the vulture's "eye has not ſeen," and lead you by ſome unknown gate or portal, out of a wilderneſs and labyrinth of difficulties wherein you have been long wandering.

Implore conſtantly his divine grace to point your inclinations to proper ſtudies, and to fix your heart there. He can keep off temptations on the right-hand and on the left, both by the courſe of his providence, and by the ſecret and inſenſible intimations of his Spirit. He can guard your underſtanding from every evil influence of error, and ſecure you from the danger of evil books and men, which might otherwiſe have a fatal effect, and lead you into pernicious miſtakes.

Nor let this ſort of advice fall under the cenſure of the godleſs and profane, as a mere piece of bigotry or enthuſiaſm derived from faith and the bible: for the reaſons which I have given to ſupport this pious prac-

tice of invoking the bleſſing of God on our ſtudies, are derived from the light of nature as well as revelation. He that made our ſouls and is the Father of ſpirits, ſhall he not be ſuppoſed to have a moſt friendly influence towards the inſtruction and government of them? The Author of our rational powers can involve them in darkneſs when he pleaſes by a ſudden diſtemper, or he can abandon them to wander into dark and fooliſh opinions when they are filled with a vain conceit of their own light. He expects to be acknowledged in the common affairs of life, and he does as certainly expect it in the ſuperior operations of the mind, and in the ſearch of knowledge and truth. The very *Greek heathens* by the light of reaſon were taught to ſay, Ex Διος αρχομεθα, and the *Latins*, *A Jove principium, muſæ.* In the works of learning they thought it neceſſary to begin with God. Even the poets call upon the *muſe* as a goddeſs to aſſiſt them in their compoſitions.

The firſt lines of *Homer* in his *Iliad* and his *Odyſſey*, the firſt line of *Muſæus* in his ſong of *Hero* and *Leander*, the beginning of *Heſiod* in his poem of *Weeks and Days*, and ſeveral others, furniſh us with ſufficient examples of this kind; nor does *Ovid* leave out this piece of devotion as he begins his ſtories of the *Metamorphoſis*. *Chriſtianity* ſo much the more obliges us by the precepts of Scripture to invoke the aſſiſtance of the true God in all our labours of the mind, for the improvement of ourſelves and others. Biſhop *Saunderſon* ſays, that *ſtudy without prayer is atheiſm*, as well as that *prayer without ſtudy is preſumption*. And we are ſtill more abundantly encouraged by the teſtimony of thoſe who have acknowledged from their own experience, that ſincere prayer was no hinderance to their ſtudies; they have gotten more knowledge ſometimes upon their knees, than by their labour in peruſing a variety of authors; and they have left this obſervation for ſuch as follow, *Bene oraſſe eſt bene ſtuduiſſe*. Praying is the beſt ſtudying.

To conclude, let induſtry and devotion join together, and you need not doubt the happy ſucceſs, *Prov.* ii. 2.

" Incline thine ear to wiſdom, apply thine heart to " underſtanding: cry after knowledge, and lift up thy " voice; ſeek her as ſilver, and ſearch for her as for " hidden treaſures: then ſhalt thou underſtand the " fear of the Lord, *&c.* which is the beginning of " wiſdom. It is the Lord who gives wiſdom even to " the ſimple, and out of his mouth cometh knowledge " and underſtanding."

CHAP. II.

Obſervation, Reading, Inſtruction by Lectures, Converſation, and Study compared.

THERE are *five eminent means or methods* whereby the mind is improved in the knowledge of things, and theſe are *obſervation*, *reading*, *inſtruction* by *lectures*, *converſation*, and *meditation*; which laſt in a moſt peculiar manner is called *ſtudy*.

Let us ſurvey the general *definitions* or *deſcriptions* of them all.

I. *OBSERVATION* is the *notice that we take of all occurrences in human life, whether they are ſenſible or intellectual, whether relating to perſons or things, to ourſelves or others.* It is this that furniſhes us even from our infancy, with a rich variety of ideas and propoſitions, words and phraſes: it is by this we know that *fire will burn*, that *the ſun gives light*, that a *horſe eats graſs*, that *an acorn produces an oak*, that *man is a being capable of reaſoning and diſcourſe*, that *our judgment is weak*, that *our miſtakes are many*, that *our ſorrows are great*, that *our bodies die and are carried to the grave*, and that *one generation ſucceeds another*. *All thoſe* things which we ſee, which we hear or feel, which we perceive by ſenſe or conſciouſneſs, or which we know in a direct manner, with ſcarce any exerciſe of our reflecting faculties or our reaſoning powers, may be included under the general name of *obſervation*.

When this *obſervation* relates to any thing that immediately concerns ourſelves, and of which we are conſcious, it may be called *experience*. So I am ſaid to know or experience that *I have in myſelf a power of thinking, fearing, loving*, &c. that *I have appetites and paſſions* working in me, and *many perſonal occurrences* have attended me in this life.

Obſervation therefore includes all that Mr. *Locke* means by *ſenſation* and *reflection*.

When we are ſearching out the nature or properties of any being, by various methods of trial; or when we apply ſome active powers or ſet ſome cauſes at work, to *obſerve* what effects they would produce, this ſort of *obſervation* is called *experiment*. So when I throw *a bullet into water*, I find it *ſinks*: and when I throw the ſame *bullet into quickſilver*, I ſee it *ſwims*: but if I beat out *this bullet into a thin hollow ſhape* like a diſh, then it will *ſwim in the water* too. So when I ſtrike two flints together, I find they produce fire: when I throw a *ſeed into the earth*, it *grows up into a plant*.

All theſe belong to the firſt method of knowledge, which I call *obſervation*.

II. *READING* is that means or method of knowledge whereby "we acquaint ourſelves with what other "men have written or publiſhed to the world in their "writings." Theſe arts of *reading* and *writing* are of infinite advantage; for by them we are made partakers of the ſentiments, obſervations, reaſonings, and improvements of all the learned world, in the moſt remote nations, and in former ages, almoſt from the beginning of mankind.

III. *PUBLIC* or *private lectures*, are ſuch "verbal "inſtructions as are given by a teacher while the "learners attend in ſilence." This is the way of learning *religion* from the pulpit, or of *philoſophy* or *theology* from the profeſſor's chair, or of *mathematics* by a teacher ſhewing us various theorems or problems, *i. e.* ſpeculations or practices, by demonſtration and opera-

tion, with all the inſtruments of art neceſſary to thoſe operations.

IV. *CONVERSATION* is another method of improving our minds, wherein "by mutual diſcourſe and "inquiry, we learn the ſentiments of others, as well "as communicate our ſentiments to others in the ſame "manner." Sometimes indeed, though both parties ſpeak by turns, yet the advantage is only on one ſide; as, when a *teacher* and a *learner* meet and diſcourſe together: but frequently the profit is mutual. Under this head of *converſation*, we may alſo rank *diſputes* of various kinds.

V. *MEDITATION* or *ſtudy* includes all thoſe "exerciſes of the mind whereby we render all the for-"mer methods uſeful for our increaſe in true know-"ledge and wiſdom." It is by *meditation* we come to confirm our memory of things that paſs through our thoughts in the occurrences of life, in our own experiences, and in the obſervations we make: it is by meditation that we draw various inferences, and eſtabliſh in our minds general principles of knowledge. It is by *meditation* that we compare the various ideas which we derive from our ſenſes, or from the operations of our ſouls, and join them in propoſitions. It is by *meditation* that we fix in our memory whatſoever we learn, and form our own judgment of the truth or falſehood, the ſtrength or weakneſs of what others ſpeak or write. It is *meditation* or ſtudy that draws out long chains of argument, and ſearches and finds deep and difficult truths, which before lay concealed in darkneſs.

It would be a needleſs thing to prove that our own ſolitary *meditations*, together with the few *obſervations* that the moſt part of mankind are capable of making, are not ſufficient of themſelves to lead us into the attainment of any conſiderable proportion of knowledge, at leaſt in an age ſo much improved as ours is, without the aſſiſtance of *converſation* and *reading*, and other *proper inſtructions* that are to be attained in our days. Yet each of theſe five methods have their *peculiar advantages*, whereby they aſſiſt each other; and their *pe-*

culiar defects, which have need to be ſupplied by the other's aſſiſtance. Let us trace over ſome of the particular *advantages* of each.

I. One method of improving the mind is *obſervation*, and the *advantages* of it are theſe.

1. It is owing to *obſervation* that our "mind is furniſhed with the firſt, ſimple and complex ideas." It is this lays the ground-work and foundation of all knowledge, and makes us capable of uſing any of the other methods for improving the mind: for if we did not attain a variety of ſenſible and intellectual ideas by the *ſenſation* of outward objects, by the *conſciouſneſs* of our own appetites and paſſions, pleaſures and pains, and by inward *experience* of the actings of our own ſpirits, it would be impoſſible either for men or books to teach us any thing It is obſervation that muſt give us our firſt ideas of things, as it includes in it *ſenſe* and *conſciouſneſs*.

2. All our knowledge derived from *obſervation*, whether it be of ſingle ideas or of propoſitions, is *knowledge gotten at firſt hand*. Hereby we ſee and know things as they are, or as they appear to us; we take the impreſſions of them on our minds from the original objects themſelves, which give a clearer and ſtronger conception of things; theſe ideas are more lively, and the propoſitions (at leaſt in many caſes) are much more evident. Whereas what knowledge we derive from *lectures*, *reading*, and *converſation*, is but the copy of other men's ideas, that is, the picture of a picture; and it is one remove further from the original.

3. Another *advantage of obſervation* is, that we may *gain knowledge all the day long*, and every moment of our lives, and every moment of our exiſtence we may be adding ſomething to our intellectual treaſures thereby, except only while we are aſleep; and even then the remembrance of our dreaming will teach us ſome truths, and lay a foundation for a better acquaintance with human nature, both in the powers and in the frailties of it.

II. The next way of improving the mind is by *reading*, and the *advantages of it* are ſuch as theſe.

1. By *reading* we acquaint ourſelves in a very extenſive manner "with the affairs, actions, and thoughts of "the living and the dead, in the moſt remote nations, "and in moſt diſtant ages;" and that with as much eaſe as though they lived in our own age and nation. By *reading* of books we may learn ſomething from *all parts of mankind*; whereas by *obſervation* we learn all from ourſelves, and only what comes within our own direct cognizance; by *converſation* we can only enjoy the aſſiſtance of a *very few perſons*, viz. thoſe who are near us, and live at the ſame time when we do, that is, our *neighbours* and *contemporaries*: but our knowledge is much more narrowed ſtill, if we confine ourſelves merely to our own ſolitary reaſonings, without much obſervation or reading: For then all our improvement muſt ariſe only from our own inward powers and meditations.

2. By *reading* we learn not only the actions and the ſentiments of different nations and ages, but we transfer to ourſelves the knowledge and improvements of the "moſt learned men, the wiſeſt and the beſt of man-"kind," when or whereſoever they lived: For though many books have been written by weak and injudicious perſons, yet the moſt of thoſe books which have obtained great reputation in the world, are the products of great and wiſe men in their ſeveral ages and nations: whereas we can obtain the *converſation* and *inſtruction* of thoſe only who are within the reach of our dwelling, or our acquaintance, whether they are wiſe or unwiſe: and ſometimes that narrow ſphere ſcarcely affords any perſon of great eminence in wiſdom or learning, unleſs our *inſtructor* happen to have this character. And as for our own *ſtudy* and *meditations*, even when we arrive at ſome good degrees of learning, our advantage for further improvement in knowledge by them, is ſtill far more contracted than what we may derive from *reading*.

3. When *we read good authors* we learn "the beſt, "the moſt laboured, and moſt refined ſentiments even "of thoſe wiſe and learned men;" for they have ſtudied hard, and have committed to writing their matu-

reſt thoughts, and the reſult of their long *ſtudy* and *experience:* whereas by *converſation*, and in ſome *lectures*, we obtain many times only the preſent thoughts of our *tutors* or *friends* which (though they may be bright and uſeful) yet, at firſt perhaps, may be ſudden and indigeſted, and are mere hints which have riſen to no maturity.

4. It is another advantage of *reading*, that we may "review what we have read;" we may conſult the page again and again, and meditate on it at ſucceſſive ſeaſons in our ſereneſt and retired hours, having the book always at hand: but what we obtain by *converſation* and in *lectures*, is oftentimes loſt again as ſoon as the company breaks up, or at leaſt when the day vaniſhes; unleſs we happen to have the talent of a good memory, or quickly retire and note down what *remarkables* we have found in thoſe diſcourſes. And for the ſame reaſon, and for want of retiring and writing, many a learned man has loſt ſeveral uſeful meditations of his own, and could never recal them again.

III. The advantages of *verbal inſtructions by public or private lectures* are theſe.

1. There is ſomething *more ſprightly*, *more delightful*, and *entertaining* in the living diſcourſe of a wiſe, a learned, and well-qualified teacher, than there is in the ſilent and ſedentary practice of reading. The very turn of voice, the good pronunciation, and the polite and alluring manner which ſome teachers have attained, will engage the attention, keep the ſoul fixed, and convey and inſinuate into the mind, the ideas of things in a more lively and forcible way, than the *mere reading of books* in the ſilence and retirement of the cloſet.

2. A tutor or inſtructor, when he paraphraſes and explains other authors, can "mark out the preciſe point "of difficulty or controverſy," and unfold it. He can ſhew you which paragraphs are of greateſt importance, and which are of leſs moment. He can teach his hearers what authors, or what parts of an author, are beſt worth reading on any particular ſubject; and thus ſave his diſciples much time and pains, by ſhortening the

labours of their cloſet and private ſtudies. He can ſhew you what were the doctrines of the *ancients* in a *compendium*, which perhaps would coſt much labour and the peruſal of many books to attain. He can inform you what new doctrines or ſentiments are riſing in the world, before they come to be public; as well as acquaint you with his own private thoughts, and his own experiments and obſervations, which never were, and perhaps never will be publiſhed to the world, and yet may be very valuable and uſeful.

3. A living inſtructor *can convey to our ſenſes thoſe notions with which he would furniſh our minds, when he teaches us natural philoſophy*, or moſt parts of *mathematical learning*. He can make the *experiments* before our eyes. He can deſcribe *figures* and *diagrams*, point to the *lines* and *angles*, and make out the *demonſtration* in a more intelligible manner by ſenſible means, which cannot be done ſo well by mere reading, even though we ſhould have the ſame figures lying in a book before our eyes. A living teacher, therefore, is a moſt neceſſary help in theſe ſtudies.

I might add alſo, that even where the ſubject of diſcourſe is *moral*, *logical*, or *rhetorical*, &c. and which does not directly come under the notice of our ſenſes, a tutor may explain his ideas by ſuch familiar examples, and plain or ſimple ſimilitudes, as ſeldom find place in books and writings.

4. When an inſtructor in his lectures delivers any matter of difficulty, or expreſſes himſelf in ſuch a manner as ſeems obſcure, ſo that you do not take up his ideas clearly or fully, *you have opportunity*, at leaſt when the lecture is finiſhed, or at other proper ſeaſons, to *inquire how ſuch a ſentence ſhould be underſtood, or how ſuch a difficulty may be explained and removed.*

If there be permiſſion given to free converſe with the tutor, either in the midſt of the lecture, or rather at the end of it, concerning any doubts or difficulties that occur to the hearer, this brings it very near to *converſation* or *diſcourſe*.

IV. *CONVERSATION* is the next method of improvement, and it is attended with the following *advantages.*

1. When we *converſe* familiarly with a learned friend, *we have his own help at hand to explain to us every word and ſentiment that ſeems obſcure* in his diſcourſe, and to inform us of his whole meaning, ſo that we are in much leſs danger of miſtaking his ſenſe; whereas in *books*, whatſoever is really obſcure, may alſo abide always obſcure without remedy, ſince the author is not at hand, that we may inquire his ſenſe.

If we miſtake the meaning of our friend in *converſation*, we are quickly ſet right again; but in *reading* we many times go on in the ſame miſtake, and are not capable of recovering ourſelves from it. Thence it comes to paſs, that we have ſo many conteſts in all ages about the *meaning of ancient authors*, and eſpecially the *ſacred writers.* Happy ſhould we be, could we but converſe with *Moſes*, *Iſaiah*, and St. *Paul*, and conſult the prophets and apoſtles, when we meet with a difficult text? But that glorious converſation is reſerved for the ages of future bleſſedneſs.

2. When we are *diſcourſing* upon any theme with a friend, *we may propoſe our doubts and objections againſt his ſentiments*, and *have them ſolved and anſwered at once.*—The difficulties that ariſe in our minds may be removed by one enlightening word of our *correſpondent*; whereas in *reading*, if a difficulty or queſtion ariſe in our thoughts which the author has not happened to mention, we muſt be content without a preſent anſwer or ſolution of it. Books cannot ſpeak.

3. Not only the doubts which ariſe in the mind upon any ſubject of diſcourſe are eaſily propoſed and ſolved in *converſation*, but the very *difficulties we meet with in books and in our private ſtudies*, may find a relief by *friendly conference.* We may pore upon a knotty point in ſolitary meditation many months without a ſolution, becauſe perhaps we have gotten into a wrong tract of thought; and our labour (while we are pur-

ſuing a falſe ſcent) is not only uſeleſs and unſucceſsful, but it leads us perhaps into a long train of error for want of being corrected in the firſt ſtep. But if we note down this difficulty when we read it, we may propoſe it to an ingenious *correſpondent* when we ſee him; we may be relieved in a moment, and find the difficulty vaniſh: he beholds the object perhaps in a different view, ſets it before us in quite another light, leads us at once into evidence and truth, and that with a delightful ſurpriſe.

4. *Converſation calls out into light what but been lodged in all the receſſes and ſecret chambers of the ſoul:* by occaſional hints and incidents it brings old uſeful notions into remembrance; it unfolds and diſplays the hidden treaſures of knowledge with which *reading*, *obſervation*, and *ſtudy* had before furniſhed the mind. By mutual diſcourſe the ſoul is awakened and allured to bring forth its hoards of knowledge, and it learns how to render them moſt uſeful to mankind. A man of vaſt reading without converſation, is like a *miſer* who lives only to himſelf.

5. In free and friendly *converſation* our *intellectual powers are more animated, and our ſpirits act with a ſuperior vigour in the queſt and purſuit of unknown truths.* There is a ſharpneſs and ſagacity of thought that attends *converſation*, beyond what we find whilſt we are ſhut up reading and muſing in our retirements. Our ſouls may be *ſerene* in ſolitude, but not *ſparkling*, though perhaps we are employed in reading the works of the brighteſt writers. Often has it happened in *free diſcourſe*, that new thoughts are ſtrangely ſtruck out, and the ſeeds of truth ſparkle and blaze through the company, which in calm and ſilent reading would never have been excited. By *converſation* you will both give and receive this benefit; as *flints* when put into motion and ſtriking againſt each other produce living fire on both ſides, which would never have riſen from the ſame hard materials in a ſtate of reſt.

6. In generous *converſation*, amongſt ingenious and learned men, we have a great advantage of propoſing

our private opinions, and of *bringing our own ſentiments to the teſt*, and learning in a more compendious and a ſafer way what the world will judge of them, how mankind will receive them, what objections may be raiſed againſt them, what defects there are in our ſcheme, and how to correct our own miſtakes; which advantages are not ſo eaſy to be obtained by our own private *meditations:* for the pleaſure we take in our own notions, and the *paſſion of ſelf-love*, as well as the *narrowneſs* of *our views*, tempt us to paſs too favourable an opinion on our own ſchemes; whereas the variety of *genius* in our ſeveral aſſociates, will give happy notices how our opinions will ſtand in the view of mankind.

7. It is alſo another conſiderable advantage of *converſation*, that it furniſhes the ſtudent with the *knowledge of men* and the affairs of life, as *reading* furniſhes him with *book-learning*. A man who dwells all his days among books may have amaſſed together a vaſt heap of notions, but he may be a *mere ſcholar*, which is a contemptible ſort of character in the world. A hermit who has been ſhut up in his cell in a college, has contracted a ſort of mould and ruſt upon his ſoul, and all his airs of behaviour have a certain awkwardneſs in them; but theſe awkward airs are worn away by degrees in company: the ruſt and the mould are filed and bruſhed off by polite converſation. The *ſcholar* now becomes a *citizen* or a *gentleman*, a *neighbour* and a *friend*; he learns how to dreſs his ſentiments in the faireſt colours, as well as to ſet them in the ſtrongeſt light. Thus he brings out his notions with honour, he makes ſome uſe of them in the world, and improves the theory by the practice

But before we proceed too far in finiſhing a bright character by *converſation*, we ſhould conſider that ſomething elſe is neceſſary beſides *an acquaintance with men and books:* and therefore I add,

V. Mere *lectures*, *reading*, and *converſation*, without *thinking*, are not ſufficient to make a man of knowledge and wiſdom. It is our own *thought* and *reflection*, *ſtudy*

and *meditation*, muſt attend all the other methods of improvement, and perfect them. It carries theſe advantages with it:

1. Though *obſervation* and *inſtruction*, *reading* and *converſation*, may furniſh us with many ideas of men and things, yet it is *our own meditation* and the labour of our own *thoughts* that muſt form our judgment of things. Our own thoughts ſhould join or disjoin theſe ideas in a propoſition for ourſelves: it is our own mind that *muſt judge for ourſelves concerning* the agreement or diſagreement of ideas, and form propoſitions of truth out of them. *Reading* and *converſation* may acquaint us with many *truths* and with many arguments to ſupport them, but it is our own *ſtudy* and *reaſoning* that muſt determine whether theſe propoſitions are true, and whether theſe arguments are juſt and ſolid.

It is confeſt there are a thouſand things which our eyes have not ſeen, and which would never come within the reach of our perſonal and immediate knowledge and *obſervation*, becauſe of the diſtance of times and places: theſe muſt be known by conſulting other perſons; and that is done either in their *writings* or in their *diſcourſes*. But after all, let this be a fixed point with us, that it is our own *reflection* and *judgment* muſt determine how far we ſhould receive that which books or men inform us of, and how far they are worthy of our aſſent and credit.

2. It is *meditation* and *ſtudy* that *transfers and conveys the notions and ſentiments of others to ourſelves*, ſo as to make them properly our own. It is our own *judgment* upon them as well as our *memory* of them, that makes them become *our own property*. It does as it were concoct our intellectual food, and turns it into a part of *ourſelves:* juſt as a man may call his limbs and his fleſh *his own*, whether he borrowed the materials from the ox or the ſheep, from the lark or the lobſter; whether he derived it from corn or milk, the fruits of the trees, or the herbs and roots of the earth; it is all now become one ſubſtance with himſelf, and he wields and manages thoſe muſcles and

limbs for his own proper purpoſes, which once were the ſubſtance of other animals or vegetables; that very ſubſtance which laſt week was grazing in the field or ſwimming in the ſea, waving in the milk-pail or growing in the garden, is now become part of the man.

3. By *ſtudy and meditation* we *improve the hints* that we have acquired by *obſervation, converſation,* and *reading;* we take more time in thinking, and by the labour of the mind we penetrate deeper into the themes of knowledge, and carry our thoughts ſometimes much farther on many ſubjects, than we ever met with either in the *books* of the dead or *diſcourſes* of the living. It is our own *reaſoning* that draws out one truth from another, and forms a whole ſcheme of ſcience from a few hints which we borrowed elſewhere.

By a ſurvey of theſe things we may juſtly conclude, that he who ſpends all his time in *hearing lectures,* or *poring upon books, without obſervation, meditation,* or *converſe,* will have but a mere *hiſtorical knowledge of learning,* and be able only to tell what others have known or ſaid on the ſubject: he that lets all his time flow away in *converſation, without* due *obſervation, reading,* or *ſtudy,* will gain but a ſlight and ſuperficial knowledge, which will be in danger of vaniſhing with the voice of the ſpeaker: and he that confines himſelf merely to his cloſet and his own narrow *obſervation* of things, and is taught only by his own *ſolitary thoughts,* without *inſtruction by lectures, reading, or free converſation,* will be in danger of a narrow ſpirit, a vain conceit of himſelf, and an unreaſonable contempt of others; and after all, he will obtain but a very limited and imperfect view and knowledge of *things,* and he will ſeldom learn how to make that knowledge uſeful.

Theſe *five methods of improvement* ſhould be purſued jointly, and go hand in hand, where our circumſtances are ſo happy as to find opportunity and conveniency to enjoy them all: though I muſt give my opinion, that two of them, *viz. reading* and *meditation,* ſhould employ much more of our time than public *lectures,* or *converſation* and diſcourſe. As for *obſervation* we may be

always acquiring knowledge that way, whether we are alone or in company.

But it will be for our further improvement, if we go over all these *five methods* of obtaining knowledge more distinctly, and more at large, and see what special advances in useful science we may draw from them all.

CHAP. III.

Rules relating to OBSERVATION.

THOUGH *observation* in the strict sense of the word, and as it is distinguished from *meditation* and *study*, is the first means of improvement, and in its strictest sense does not include in it any *reasonings* of the mind upon the things which we *observe*, or *inferences* drawn from them; yet the motions of the mind are so exceeding swift, that it is hardly possible for a thinking man to gain *experiences* or *observations*, without making some secret and short *reflections* upon them: and therefore in giving a few *directions* concerning this method of improvement, I shall not so narrowly confine myself to the *first mere impression of objects on the mind by observation*; but include also some hints which relate to the first, most easy, and obvious *reflections* or *reasoning* which arise from them.

1. LET *the enlargement of your knowledge be one constant view and design in life*; since *there is no time or place, no transactions, occurrences, or engagements in life, which exclude us from this method of improving the mind.* When we are *alone*, even in darkness and silence, we may converse with our own hearts, observe the working of our own spirits, and reflect upon the inward motions of our own passions in some of the latest occurrences in life; we may acquaint ourselves with the powers and properties, the tendencies and inclinations both of body and spirit, and gain a more intimate *knowledge of ourselves.* When we are *in company*, we may discover something more of human nature, of

human paſſions and follies, and of human affairs, vices, and virtues, by converſing with mankind, and obſerving their conduct. Nor is there any thing more valuable than the *knowledge of ourſelves, and the knowledge of men*, except it be the *knowledge of God* who made us, and our relation to him as our Governor.

When we are in the *houſe* or the *city*, whereſoever we turn our eyes, we ſee the *works of men*; when we are *abroad in the country*, we behold more of the *works of God*. The ſkies and the ground above and beneath us, and the animal and vegetable world round about us, may entertain our obſervation with ten thouſand varieties.

Endeavour therefore to *derive ſome inſtruction or improvement of the mind from every thing which you ſee or hear, from every thing which occurs in human life, from every thing within you or without you.*

Fetch down ſome knowledge from the *clouds*, the *ſtars*, the *ſun*, the *moon*, and the *revolutions of all the planets*: dig and draw up ſome valuable meditations from the *depths of the earth*, and ſearch them through the vaſt *oceans of water*: extract ſome intellectual improvements from the *minerals* and *metals*; from the wonders of nature among the *vegetables*, and *herbs*, *trees*, and *flowers*. Learn ſome leſſons from the *birds*, and the *beaſts*, and the *meaneſt inſect*. Read the wiſdom of God and his admirable contrivance in them all. Read his almighty power, his rich and various goodneſs, in all the works of his hands.

From the *day* and the *night*, the *hours* and the *flying minutes*, learn a wiſe improvement of time, and be watchful to ſeize every opportunity to increaſe in knowledge.

From *the viciſſitudes and revolutions of nations and families*, and from the *various occurrences of the world*, learn the inſtability of mortal affairs, the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death. From a *coffin* and a *funeral*, learn to meditate upon your own departure.

From the *vices* and *follies* of others, obſerve what is hateful in them; conſider how ſuch a practice looks in

another perſon, and remember that it looks as ill or worſe in yourſelf. From the *virtues of others*, learn ſomething worthy of your imitation.

From the *deformity*, the *diſtreſs*, or *calamity* of others, derive leſſons of thankfulneſs to God, and hymns of grateful praiſe to your Creator, Governor, and Benefactor, who has formed you in a better mould, and guarded you from thoſe evils. Learn alſo the ſacred leſſon of contentment in your own eſtate, and compaſſion to your neighbour under his miſeries.

From your *natural powers*, *ſenſations*, *judgment*, *memory*, *hands*, *feet*, &c. make this inference, that they were not given you for nothing, but for ſome uſeful employment to the honour of your Maker, and for the good of your fellow-creatures, as well as for your own beſt intereſt and final happineſs.

From the *ſorrows*, the *pains*, the *ſickneſſes*, and *ſufferings* that attend you, learn the evil of ſin, and the imperfection of your preſent ſtate. From *your own ſins* and *follies* learn the patience of God toward you, and the practice of humility toward God and man.

Thus from every appearance in nature, and from every occurrence of life, you may derive *natural*, *moral*, and *religious obſervations* to entertain your minds, as well as *rules of conduct* in the affairs relating to this life, and that which is to come.

II. In order to furniſh the mind with a rich variety of ideas, the *laudable curioſity of young people ſhould be indulged and gratified rather than diſcouraged.* It is a very hopeful ſign in young perſons, to ſee them curious in obſerving, and inquiſitive in ſearching into the greateſt part of things that occur; nor ſhould ſuch an inquiring temper be frowned into ſilence, nor be rigorouſly reſtrained, but ſhould rather be ſatisfied by proper anſwers given to all thoſe queries.

For this reaſon alſo, where time and fortune allow it, young people ſhould be led into company at proper ſeaſons, ſhould be carried abroad to ſee the fields, and the woods, and the rivers, the buildings, towns, and

cities distant from their own dwelling; they should be entertained with the sight of strange birds, beasts, fishes, insects; vegetables, and productions both of nature and art of every kind, whether they are the products of their own or foreign nations: and in due time, where Providence gives opportunity, they may travel under a wise inspector or tutor to different parts of the world for the same end, that they may bring home treasures of useful knowledge.

III. Among all these observations, *write down what is more remarkable and uncommon:* reserve these *remarks* in store for proper occasions, and at proper seasons take a review of them. Such a practice will give you a *habit of useful thinking:* this will secure the workings of your soul from running to waste, and by this means even your looser moments will turn to happy account both here and hereafter.

And whatever useful observations have been made, let them be at least some part of the subject of your conversation among your friends at next meeting.

Let the circumstances or situations of life be what or where they will, a man should never neglect this improvement which may be derived from *observation*. Let him travel into the *East* or *West Indies*, and fulfil the duties of the military or the mercantile life there; let him rove through the earth or the seas for his own humour as a traveller, or pursue his diversions in what part of the world he pleases as a gentleman; let prosperous or adverse fortune call him to the most distant parts of the globe; still let him carry on his knowledge and the improvement of his soul by wise *observations*. In due time, by this means he may render himself some way useful to the societies of mankind.

THEOBALDINO, in his younger years, visited the forests of *Norway* on the account of trade and timber, and besides his proper observations of the growth of trees on those *northern* mountains, he learnt there was a sort of people called *Finns*, in those confines which border upon *Sweden*, whose habitation is in the woods: and he lived afterwards to give a good

account of them, and ſome of their cuſtoms, to the Royal Society for the improvement of natural knowledge. PUTEOLI was taken captive into *Turkey* in his youth, and travelled with his maſter in their holy pilgrimage to *Mecca*, whereby he became more intelligent in the forms, ceremonies, and fooleries of the *Mahometan* worſhip, than perhaps ever any *Briton* knew before; and by his manuſcripts we are more acquainted in this laſt century with the *Turkiſh* facreds than any one had ever informed us.

IV. LET us *keep our minds as free as poſſible from paſſions and prejudices*, for theſe will give a wrong turn to our *obſervations* both on perſons and things. The eyes of a man in the *jaundice* make *yellow* obſervations on every thing; and the ſoul tinctured with any *paſſion or prejudice* diffuſes a falſe colour over the real appearances of things, and diſguiſes many of the common occurrences of life: it never beholds things in a true light, nor ſuffers them to appear as they are. Whenſoever therefore you would make *proper obſervations*, let *ſelf*, with all its influences, ſtand aſide as far as poſſible; abſtract *your own intereſt* and *your own concern* from them, and bid all friendſhips and enmities ſtand aloof and keep out of the way, in the obſervations that you make relating to perſons and things.

If this rule were well obeyed, we ſhould be much better guarded againſt thoſe common pieces of miſconduct in the obſervations of men, *viz.* the falſe judgments of *pride* and *envy*. How ready is *envy* to mingle with the notices which we take of other perſons? How often is mankind prone to put an ill ſenſe upon the actions of their neighbours, to take a ſurvey of them in an evil poſition, and in an unhappy light? And by this means we form a worſe opinion of our neighbours than they deſerve; while at the ſame time *pride* and *ſelf-flattery* tempt us to make unjuſt obſervations on ourſelves in our own favour. In all the favourable judgments we paſs concerning ourſelves, we ſhould allow a little abatement on this account.

V. In making your *obſervations on perſons*, take care of indulging that buſy curioſity which is ever inquiring into *private* and *domeſtic affairs*, with an endleſs itch of learning the ſecret hiſtory of families. It is but ſeldom that ſuch a prying curioſity attains any valuable ends; it often begets ſuſpicions, jealouſies, and diſturbances in houſeholds, and it is a frequent temptation to perſons to defame their neighbours. Some perſons cannot help telling what they know; a *buſy body* is moſt liable to become a *tatler* upon every occaſion.

VI. Let your *obſervations even of perſons and their conduct*, be chiefly deſigned in order to lead you to a better acquaintance with *things*, particularly with *human nature*; and to inform you what to imitate and what to avoid, rather than to furniſh out matter for the evil paſſions of the mind, or the impertinencies of diſcourſe, and reproaches of the tongue.

VII. Though it may be proper ſometimes to make your *obſervations concerning* perſons as well as things, the ſubject of your diſcourſe in learned or uſeful converſation; yet what *remarks* you make on particular perſons, eſpecially to their diſadvantage, ſhould for the moſt part lie hid in your own breaſt, till ſome juſt and apparent occaſion, ſome neceſſary call of Providence leads you to ſpeak to them.

If the character or conduct which you obſerve be greatly culpable, it ſhould ſo much the leſs be publiſhed. You may treaſure up ſuch remarks of the follies, indecencies, or vices of your neighbours, as may be a conſtant guard againſt your practice of the ſame, without expoſing the reputation of your neighbour on that account. It is a good old rule, that *our converſation ſhould rather be laid out on things than on perſons*; and this rule ſhould generally be obſerved, unleſs names be concealed, whereſoever the faults or follies of mankind are our preſent theme.

Our late archbiſhop *Tillotſon* has written a ſmall but excellent diſcourſe on *evil ſpeaking*, wherein he admi-

rably explains, limits, and applies that general apoſtolic precept, *Speak evil of no man*, *Tit.* iii. 2.

VIII. *BE not too haſty to erect general theories from a few particular obſervations, appearances, or experiments.* This is what the *logicians* call a *falſe induction.* When general obſervations are drawn from ſo many particulars as to become certain and indubitable, theſe are jewels of knowledge, comprehending great treaſure in a little room; but they are therefore to be made with the greater care and caution, leſt errors become large and diffuſive, if we ſhould miſtake in theſe *general notions.*

A haſty determination of ſome univerſal principles, without a due ſurvey of all the particular caſes which may be included in them, is the way to lay a trap for our own underſtandings in their purſuit of any ſubject, and we ſhall often be taken captives into miſtake and falſehood. *Niveo* in his youth obſerved, that on three *Chriſtmas-days* together there fell a good quantity of ſnow, and now he hath writ it down in his almanack as part of his wiſe remarks on the weather, that it will always ſnow at *Chriſtmas*. *Euron*, a young lad, took notice ten times that there was a ſharp froſt when the wind was in the *north-eaſt*, therefore in the middle of laſt *July* he almoſt expected it ſhould freeze, becauſe the weather-cocks ſhewed him a *north-eaſt* wind: and he was ſtill more diſappointed when he found it a very ſultry ſeaſon. It is the ſame haſty judgment that hath thrown ſcandal on a whole nation for the ſake of ſome culpable characters belonging to ſeveral particular natives of that country; whereas all the *Frenchmen* are not gay and airy; all the *Italians* are not jealous and revengeful; nor are all the *Engliſh* over-run with the ſpleen.

CHAP. IV.

Of Books and Reading.

I.

THE world is full of books, but there are multitudes which are ſo ill written they were never worth any man's reading; and there are thouſands more which may be good in their kind, yet are worth nothing when the month, or year, or occaſion is paſt for which they were written. Others may be valuable in themſelves, for ſome ſpecial purpoſe or in ſome peculiar ſcience, but are not fit to be peruſed by any but thoſe who are engaged in that particular ſcience or buſineſs. To what uſe is it for a *divine* or *phyſician*, or a *tradeſman*, to read over the huge volumes of *reports of judged caſes in the law?* or for a lawyer to learn *Hebrew* and read the *Rabbins?* It is of vaſt advantage for improvement of knowledge and ſaving time, for a young man to have the moſt proper books for his reading recommended by a judicious friend.

II. *BOOKS of importance* of any kind, and eſpecially *complete treatiſes* on any ſubject, ſhould be firſt read in a more general and curſory manner, to learn a little what the treatiſe promiſes, and what you may expect from the writer's manner and ſkill. And for this end I would adviſe always that the *preface* be read, and a ſurvey taken of the *table of contents*, if there be one, before the firſt ſurvey of the book. By this means you will not only be better fitted to give the book the firſt reading, but you will be much aſſiſted in your ſecond peruſal of it, which ſhould be done with greater attention and deliberation, and you will learn with more eaſe and readineſs what the author pretends to teach. In your reading, *mark* what is new or unknown to you before, and review thoſe chapters, pages, or paragraphs. Unleſs a reader has an uncommon and moſt retentive

memory, I may venture to affirm, that there is ſcarce any book or chapter worth reading once that is not worthy of a ſecond peruſal. At leaſt take a careful review of all the lines or paragraphs which you *marked*, and make a recollection of the ſections which you thought truly valuable.

There is another reaſon alſo why I would chuſe to take a ſuperficial and curſory ſurvey of a book, before I ſit down to read it, and dwell upon it with ſtudious attention; and that is, there may be ſeveral difficulties in it which we cannot eaſily underſtand and conquer at the firſt reading, for want of a fuller comprehenſion of the author's whole ſcheme. And therefore in ſuch treatiſes we ſhould not ſtay till we maſter *every difficulty* at the firſt peruſal; for perhaps many of theſe would appear to be ſolved when we have proceeded farther in that book, or would vaniſh of themſelves upon a *ſecond reading*.

What we cannot reach and penetrate at firſt, may be noted down as matter of after conſideration and inquiry, if the pages that follow do not happen to ſtrike a complete light on thoſe which went before.

III. *IF three or four perſons agree to read the ſame book*, and each bring his own remarks upon it at ſome ſet hours appointed for converſation, and they communicate mutually their ſentiments on the ſubject, and debate about it in a friendly manner, this practice will render the reading any author more abundantly beneficial to every one of them.

IV. IF *ſeveral perſons engaged in the ſame ſtudy take into their hands diſtinct treatiſes on one ſubject*, and appoint a ſeaſon of communication once a-week, they may inform each other in a brief manner concerning the ſenſe, ſentiments, and method of thoſe ſeveral authors, and thereby promote each other's improvement, either by recommending the peruſal of the ſame book to their companions, or perhaps by ſatisfying their inquiries concerning it by converſation, without every one's peruſing it.

V. Remember that your buſineſs in *reading* or in *converſation*, eſpecially on ſubjects of natural, moral, or divine ſcience, is not merely to know the opinion of the author or ſpeaker, for this is but the mere knowledge of hiſtory; but your chief buſineſs is to conſider whether their opinions are right or no, and to improve your own ſolid knowledge of that ſubject by meditation on the themes of their writing or diſcourſe. Deal freely with every author you read, and yield up your aſſent only to evidence and juſt reaſoning on the ſubject.

Here I would be underſtood to ſpeak only of human authors, and not of the ſacred and inſpired writings. In theſe our buſineſs indeed is only to find out the ſenſe, and underſtand the true meaning of the paragraph and page, and our aſſent then is bound to follow when we are before ſatisfied that the writing is divine. Yet I might add alſo, that even this is juſt reaſoning, and this is ſufficient evidence to demand our aſſent.

But in the compoſures of men, remember you are a man as well as they; and it is not their reaſon but your own that is given to guide you when you arrive at years of diſcretion, of manly age and judgment.

VI. Let this therefore be your practice, eſpecially after you have gone through one courſe of any ſcience in your academical ſtudies; if a writer on that ſubject maintains the ſame ſentiments as you do, yet if he does *not explain* his ideas or *prove* his poſitions well, mark the faults or defects, and endeavour to do it better, either in the margin of your book, or rather in ſome papers of your own, or at leaſt let it be done in your private meditations. As for inſtance:

Where the author is *obſcure*, enlighten him: where he is *imperfect*, ſupply his deficiencies: where he is *too brief* and *conciſe*, amplify a little, and ſet his notions in a fairer view: where he is *redundant*, mark thoſe paragraphs to be retrenched: when he *trifles* and *grows impertinent*, abandon thoſe paſſages or pages: where he *argues*, obſerve whether his reaſons be concluſive: if the concluſion be true, and yet the *argument weak*, endeavour to confirm it by better proofs: where he *de-*

rives or *infers* any propoſitions *darkly* or *doubtfully*, make the juſtice of the inference appear, and add further inferences or corollaries, if ſuch occur to your mind: where you ſuppoſe he is *in a miſtake*, propoſe your objections and correct his ſentiments: what he *writes ſo well as to approve itſelf* to your judgment, both as juſt and uſeful, treaſure it up in your memory, and count it a part of your intellectual gains.

Note, Many of theſe ſame directions which I have now given, may be practiſed with regard to *converſation*, as well as *reading*, in order to render it uſeful in the moſt extenſive and laſting manner.

VII. Other things alſo of the like nature may be uſefully practiſed with regard to the authors which you read, *viz.* If the *method* of a book be *irregular*, reduce it into form by a little analyſis of your own, or by hints in the margin: if thoſe things are *heaped together* which ſhould be ſeparated, you may wiſely diſtinguiſh and divide them. If ſeveral things relating to the ſame ſubject *are ſcattered up and down ſeparately* through the treatiſe, you may bring them all to one view by references; or if the matter of a book be *really valuable and deſerving*, you may throw it into a better method, reduce it to a more logical ſcheme, or abridge it into a leſſer form; all theſe practices will have a tendency both to advance your ſkill in *logic* and method, to improve your judgment in general, and to give you a fuller ſurvey of that ſubject in particular. When you have finiſhed the treatiſe with all your obſervations upon it, recollect and determine what real improvements you have made by reading that author.

VIII. If a book has no *index* to it, or *good table of contents*, it is very uſeful to make one as you are reading it: not with that exactneſs as to include the ſenſe of every page and paragraph, which ſhould be done if you deſigned to print it; but it is ſufficient in your *index* to take notice only of thoſe parts of the book which are new to you, or which you think well written, and well worthy of your remembrance or review.

Shall I be ſo free as to aſſure my younger friends, from my own experience, that theſe methods of reading will coſt ſome pains in the firſt years of your ſtudy, and eſpecially in the firſt authors which you peruſe in any ſcience, or on any particular ſubject: but the profit will richly compenſate the pains. And in the following years of life, after you have read a few valuable books on any ſpecial ſubject in this manner, it will be very eaſy to read others of the ſame kind, becauſe you will not uſually find very much new matter in them which you have not already examined.

IX. If the writer be remarkable for any *peculiar excellencies or defects in his ſtyle or manner of writing*, make juſt obſervations upon this alſo; and whatever ornaments you find there, or whatſoever blemiſhes occur in the language or manner of the writer, you may make juſt remarks upon them. And remember, that *one book read over in this manner, with all this laborious meditation, will tend more to enrich your underſtanding than the ſkimming over the ſurface of twenty authors.*

X. By peruſing books in the manner I have deſcribed, you will make all your *reading* ſubſervient not only to the *enlargement of your treaſures of knowledge*, but alſo to the *improvement of your reaſoning powers.*

There are many who read with conſtancy and diligence, and yet make no advances in true knowledge by it. They are delighted with the notions which they read or hear, as they would be with ſtories that are told, but they do not weigh them in their minds as in a juſt balance, in order to determine their truth or falſehood; they make no obſervations upon them, or inferences from them. Perhaps their eye ſlides over the pages, or the words ſlide over their ears, and vaniſh like a *rhapſody* of evening tales, or the ſhadows of a cloud flying over a green field in a ſummer's day.

Or if they review them ſufficiently to fix them in their remembrance, it is merely with a deſign to tell the tale over again, and ſhew what men of learning they are. Thus they dream out their days in a *courſe*

of reading without real advantage. As a man may be eating all day, and for want of digeſtion is never nouriſhed; ſo theſe *endleſs readers* may cram themſelves in vain with intellectual food, and without real improvement of their minds, for want of digeſting it by proper reflections.

XI. Be diligent therefore in obſerving theſe directions. *Enter into the ſenſe and argument* of the authors you read, examine all their proofs, and then judge of the truth or falſehood of their opinions; and thereby you ſhall not only gain a rich increaſe of your underſtandings by thoſe truths which the author teaches, when you ſee them well ſupported, but you ſhall acquire alſo by degrees an habit of judging juſtly, and of reaſoning well, in imitation of the good writer, whoſe works you peruſe.

This is laborious indeed, and the mind is backward to undergo the fatigue of weighing every argument and tracing every thing to its original. It is much leſs labour to take all things upon truſt; *believing is much eaſier than arguing*. But when *Studentio* had once perſuaded his mind to tie itſelf down to this method which I have preſcribed, he ſenſibly gained an admirable facility to read, and judge of what he read, by his daily practice of it, and the man made large advances in the purſuit of truth; while *Plumbinus* and *Plumeo* made leſs progreſs in knowledge, though they had read over more folios. *Plumeo* ſkimmed over the pages like a ſwallow over the flowery meads in *May*. *Plumbinus* read every line and ſyllable, but did not give himſelf the trouble of thinking and judging about them. They both could boaſt in company of their great reading, for they knew more titles and pages than *Studentio*, but were far leſs acquainted with ſcience.

I confeſs thoſe whoſe reading is deſigned only to fit them for *much talk*, and *little knowledge*, may content themſelves to run over their authors in ſuch a ſudden and trifling way; they may devour libraries in this manner, yet be poor reaſoners at laſt, and have no ſolid wiſdom or true learning. The traveller who

walks on fair and ſoftly in a courſe that points right, and examines every turning before he ventures upon it, will come ſooner and ſafer to his journey's end, than he who runs through every lane he meets, though he gallop full ſpeed all the day. The man of *much reading* and a *large retentive memory*, but without *meditation*, may become, in the ſenſe of the world, a *knowing man;* and if he converſes much with the ancients, he may attain the fame of *learning* too: but he ſpends his days afar off from wiſdom and true judgment, and poſſeſſes very little of the ſubſtantial riches of the mind.

XII. *NEVER apply yourſelves to read any human author with a determination before-hand either for or againſt him, or with a ſettled reſolution to believe or diſbelieve, to confirm or to oppoſe whatſoever he ſaith;* but always read with a deſign to lay your mind open to truth, and to embrace it whereſoever you find it, as well as to reject every falſehood, though it appear under ever ſo fair a diſguiſe. How unhappy are thoſe men who ſeldom take an author into their hands, but they have determined before they begin, whether they will like or diſlike him! They have got ſome notion of his name, his character, his party, or his principles, by general converſation, or perhaps by ſome ſlight view of a few pages; and having all their own opinions adjuſted before-hand, they read all that he writes with a prepoſſeſſion either for or againſt him. Unhappy thoſe who hunt and purvey for a party, and ſcrape together out of every author, all thoſe things, and thoſe only, which favour their own tenets, while they deſpiſe and neglect all the reſt!

XIII. YET take this *caution*. I would not be underſtood here, as though I perſuaded a perſon to live without any ſettled principles at all, by which to judge of men, and books, and things: or that I would keep a man always doubting about his foundations. The chief things that I deſign in this advice, are theſe three.

1. That after our moſt neceſſary and important principles of ſcience, prudence, and religion, are ſettled

upon good grounds, with regard to our preſent conduct and our future hopes, we ſhould read with a juſt freedom of thought, all thoſe books which treat of ſuch ſubjects as may admit of doubt and reaſonable diſpute. Nor ſhould any of our opinions be ſo reſolved upon, eſpecially in younger years, as never to hear or to bear an oppoſition to them.

2. When we peruſe thoſe authors who defend our own ſettled ſentiments, we ſhould not take all their arguings for juſt and ſolid; but we ſhould make a wiſe diſtinction betwixt the corn and the chaff, between ſolid reaſoning and the mere ſuperficial colours of it; nor ſhould we readily ſwallow down all their leſſer opinions becauſe we agree with them in the greater.

3. That when we read thoſe authors which oppoſe our moſt certain and eſtabliſhed principles, we ſhould be ready to receive any informations from them in other points, and not abandon at once every thing they ſay, though we are well fixed in oppoſition to their main point of arguing.

——— *Fas eſt, et ab hoſte doceri.* VIRG.

Seize upon truth where-e'er 'tis found,
Amongſt your friends, amongſt your foes,
On Chriſtian *or on* Heathen *ground;*
The flower's divine where-e'er it grows:
Neglect the prickles, and aſſume the roſe.

XIV. WHAT I have ſaid hitherto on this ſubject, relating to *books* and *reading*, muſt be chiefly underſtood of that ſort of books, and thoſe hours of our reading and ſtudy, whereby we deſign to improve the intellectual powers of the mind with natural, moral, or divine knowledge. As for thoſe treatiſes which are written to direct or to enforce and perſuade our practice, there is one thing further neceſſary; and that is, that when our conſciences are convinced that theſe rules of prudence or duty belong to us, and require our conformity to them, we ſhould then call ourſelves

to account, and inquire ſeriouſly whether we have put them in practice or no; we ſhould dwell upon the arguments, and impreſs the motives and methods of perſuaſion upon our own hearts, till we feel the force and power of them inclining us to the practice of the things which are there recommended.

If folly or vice be repreſented in its open colours, or its ſecret diſguiſes, let us ſearch our hearts, and review our lives, and inquire how far we are criminal; nor ſhould we ever think we have done with the treatiſe till we feel ourſelves in ſorrow for our paſt miſconduct, and aſpiring after a victory over thoſe vices, or till we find a cure of thoſe follies begun to be wrought upon our ſouls.

In all our ſtudies and purſuits of knowledge, let us remember that virtue and vice, ſin and holineſs, and the conformation of our hearts and lives to the duties of true religion and morality, are things of far more conſequence than all the furniture of our underſtandings, and the richeſt treaſures of mere ſpeculative knowledge; and that becauſe they have a more immediate and effectual influence upon our eternal felicity or eternal ſorrow.

XV. THERE is yet another ſort of books, of which it is proper I ſhould ſay ſomething while I am treating on this ſubject; and theſe are, *hiſtory*, *poeſy*, *travels*, *books of diverſion or amuſement*; among which we may reckon alſo, little common *pamphlets*, *news-papers*, or ſuch like: for many of theſe I confeſs once reading may be ſufficient, where there is a tolerable good memory.

Or when ſeveral perſons are in company, and one reads to the reſt ſuch ſort of writings, once hearing may be ſufficient, provided that every one be ſo attentive, and ſo free as to make their occaſional remarks on ſuch lines or ſentences, ſuch periods or paragraphs, as in their opinion deſerve it. Now all thoſe paragraphs or ſentiments deſerve a remark, which are new and uncommon, are noble and excellent for the matter of them, are ſtrong and convincing for the argument

contained in them, are beautiful and elegant for the language or the manner, or any way worthy of a ſecond rehearſal; and at the requeſt of any of the company let thoſe paragraphs be read over again.

Such parts alſo of theſe writings as may happen to be remarkably ſtupid or ſilly, falſe or miſtaken, ſhould become ſubjects of an occaſional criticiſm, made by ſome of the company; and this may give occaſion to the repetition of them for confirmation of the cenſure, for amuſement or diverſion.

Still let it be remembered, that where the hiſtorical narration is of conſiderable moment, where the poeſy, oratory, *&c.* ſhine with ſome degrees of perfection and glory, a ſingle reading is neither ſufficient to ſatisfy a mind that has a true taſte of this ſort of writings; nor can we make the fulleſt and beſt improvement of them without proper reviews, and that in our retirement as well as in company. Who is there that has any *gout* for polite writings that would be ſufficiently ſatisfied with hearing the beautiful pages of *Steele* or *Addiſon*, the admirable deſcriptions of *Virgil* or *Milton*, or ſome of the fineſt poems of *Pope*, *Young*, or *Dryden*, once read over to them, and then lay them by for ever?

XVI. Among theſe writings of the latter kind we may juſtly reckon ſhort *miſcellaneous eſſays* on all manner of ſubjects: ſuch as the *Occaſional Papers*, the *Tatlers*, the *Spectators*, and ſome other books that have been compiled out of the weekly or daily products of the preſs, wherein are contained a great number of bright thoughts, ingenious remarks, and admirable obſervations, which have had a conſiderable ſhare in furniſhing the preſent age with knowledge and politeneſs.

I wiſh every paper among theſe writings could have been recommended both as innocent and uſeful. I wiſh every unſeemly idea and wanton expreſſion had been baniſhed from amongſt them, and every trifling page had been excluded from the company of the reſt when they had been bound up in volumes. But it is not to be expected, in ſo imperfect a ſtate, that every page or piece of ſuch mixed public papers ſhould be entirely

blameleſs and laudable. Yet in the main it muſt be confeſſed, there is ſo much virtue, prudence, ingenuity, and goodneſs in them, eſpecially in eight volumes of *Spectators*, there is ſuch a reverence of things ſacred, ſo many valuable remarks for our conduct in life, that they are not improper to lie in parlours, or ſummer-houſes, or places of uſual reſidence, to entertain our thoughts in any moments of leiſure, or vacant hours that occur. There is ſuch a diſcovery of the follies, iniquities, and faſhionable vices of mankind contained in them, that we may learn much of the humours and madneſſes of the age and the public world, in our own ſolitary retirement, without the danger of frequenting vicious company, or receiving the mortal infection.

XVII, AMONG other books which are proper and requiſite, in order to improve our knowledge in general, or our acquaintance with any particular ſcience, it is neceſſary that we ſhould be furniſhed with *Vocabularies* and *Dictionaries* of ſeveral ſorts, *viz.* Of *common words*, *idioms*, and *phraſes*, in order to explain their *ſenſe*; of *technical words* or the *terms of art*, to ſhew their uſe in arts and ſciences; of *names of men*, *countries*, *towns*, *rivers*, &c. which are called *hiſtorical* and *geographical dictionaries*, &c. Theſe are to be conſulted and uſed upon every occaſion; and never let an unknown word paſs in your reading, without ſeeking for its ſenſe and meaning in ſome of theſe writers.

If ſuch books are not at hand, you muſt ſupply the want of them, as well as you can, by conſulting ſuch as can inform you: and it is uſeful to note down the matters of doubt and inquiry in ſome pocket-book, and take the firſt opportunity to get them reſolved, either by perſons or books, when we meet with them.

XVIII. BE not ſatisfied with a *mere knowledge of the beſt authors* that treat of any ſubject, inſtead of *acquainting yourſelves thoroughly with the ſubject itſelf*. There is many a young ſtudent that is fond of enlarging his *knowledge of books*, and he contents himſelf with the notice he has of their *title-page*, which is the attain-

ment of a *bookſeller* rather than a *ſcholar*. Such perſons are under a great temptation to practiſe theſe two follies. (1.) *To heap up a great number of books* at greater expence than moſt of them can bear, and to furniſh their libraries infinitely better than their underſtandings. And (2.) when they have got ſuch rich treaſures of knowledge upon their ſhelves, they *imagine themſelves men of learning*, and take a pride in talking of the names of famous authors, and the ſubjects of which they treat, without any real improvement of their own minds in true ſcience or wiſdom. At beſt their learning reaches no farther than the *indexes* and *tables* of contents, while they know not how to judge or reaſon concerning the matters contained in thoſe authors.

And indeed how many volumes of learning ſoever a man poſſeſſes, he is ſtill deplorably poor in his underſtanding, till he has made theſe ſeveral parts of learning his own property, by reading and reaſoning, by judging for himſelf, and remembering what he has read.

CHAP. V.

Judgment of Books.

I.

IF we would *form a judgment of a book* which we have not ſeen before, the firſt thing that offers is the *title-page*, and we may ſometimes gueſs a little at the import and deſign of a book thereby: though it muſt be confeſt, that titles are often deceitful, and promiſe more than the book performs. The *author's name*, if it be known in the world, may help us to conjecture at the performance a little more, and lead us to gueſs in what manner it is done. A peruſal of the *preface or introduction* (which I before recommended) may further aſſiſt our judgment; and if there be an *index of the contents*, it will give us ſtill ſome advancing light.

If we have not leiſure or inclination to read over the book itſelf regularly, then by the *titles of chapters* we may be directed to peruſe ſeveral particular chapters or ſections, and obſerve whether there be any thing valuable or important in them. We ſhall find hereby whether the author explains his ideas clearly, whether he reaſons ſtrongly, whether he methodizes well, whether his thoughts and ſenſe be manly and his manner polite; or, on the other hand, whether he be obſcure, weak, trifling, and confuſed: or, finally, whether the matter may not be ſolid and ſubſtantial, though the manner or ſtyle be rude and diſagreeable.

II. By having run through ſeveral chapters and ſections in this manner, we may generally judge whether the treatiſe be worth a complete peruſal or no. But if by ſuch an occaſional ſurvey of ſome chapters, our expectation be utterly diſcouraged, we may well lay aſide that book; for there is great probability he can be but an indifferent writer on that ſubject, if he affords but one *prize* to divers *blanks*, and it may be ſome downright *blots* too. The piece can hardly be valuable if in ſeven or eight chapters which we peruſe there be but little truth, evidence, force of reaſoning, beauty, and ingenuity of thought, *&c.* mingled with much error, ignorance, impertinence, dulneſs, mean and common thoughts, inaccuracy, ſophiſtry, railing, *&c.* Life is too ſhort, and time is too precious, to read every new book quite over, in order to find that it is not worth the reading.

III. There are *ſome general miſtakes* which perſons are frequently guilty of in paſſing a judgment on the books which they read.

One is this; when a treatiſe is written but tolerably well, we are ready to paſs a favourable judgment of it, and ſometimes to exalt its character far beyond its merit, if it *agree with our own principles, and ſupport the opinions of our party.* On the other hand, if the author be of *different ſentiments*, and *eſpouſe contrary principles*, we can find neither wit nor reaſon, good ſenſe nor good language in it. Whereas, alas! if our

opinions of things were certain and infallible truth, yet a ſilly author may draw his pen in the defence of them, and he may attack even groſs errors with feeble and ridiculous arguments. *Truth* in this world is not always attended and ſupported by the wiſeſt and ſafeſt methods; and *error*, though it can never be maintained by juſt reaſoning, yet may be artfully covered and defended: an ingenious writer may put excellent colours upon his own miſtakes. Some *Socinians*, who deny the atonement of *Chriſt*, have written well, and with much appearance of argument for their own unſcriptural ſentiments, and ſome writers for the *Trinity* and *ſatisfaction* of *Chriſt*, have expoſed themſelves and the ſacred doctrine, by their feeble and fooliſh manner of handling it. Books are never to be judged of merely by their ſubject, or the opinion they repreſent, but by the juſtneſs of their ſentiments, the beauty of their manner, the force of their expreſſion, or the ſtrength of reaſon, and the weight of juſt and proper argument which appears in them.

But this folly and weakneſs of trifling inſtead of arguing does not happen to fall only to the ſhare of *Chriſtian* writers: there are ſome who have taken the pen in hand to ſupport the *Deiſtical* or *Antichriſtian* ſcheme of our days, who make big pretences to reaſon upon all occaſions, but ſeem to have left it quite behind them when they are jeſting with the Bible, and grinning at the books which we call ſacred. Some of theſe performances would ſcarce have been thought tolerable, if they had not aſſaulted the *Chriſtian* faith, though they are now grown up to a place amongſt the admired pens. I much queſtion whether ſeveral of the *rhapſodies* called the *Characteriſtics* would ever have ſurvived the firſt edition, if they had not diſcovered ſo ſtrong a tincture of *infidelity*, and now and then caſt out a profane ſneer at *our holy religion*. I have ſometimes indeed been ready to wonder, how a book in the main ſo looſely written ſhould ever obtain ſo many readers amongſt men of ſenſe. Surely they muſt be conſcious

in the perusal, that sometimes a *patrician* may write as idly as a man of *plebeian* rank, and trifle as much as an old school-man, though it is in another form. I am forced to say, there are few books that ever I read, which made any pretences to a great genius, from which I derived so little valuable knowledge as from these treatises. There is indeed amongst them a lively pertness, a parade of literature, and much of what some folks now-a-days call *politeness*; but it is hard that we should be bound to admire all the reveries of this author, under the penalty of being unfashionable.

IV. *ANOTHER mistake* which some persons fall into is this. When they read a treatise on a subject with which they *have but little acquaintance*, they find almost every thing new and strange to them, their understandings are greatly entertained and improved by the occurrence of many things which were unknown to them before, they admire the treatise, and commend the author at once; whereas if they had but attained *a good degree of skill in that science*, perhaps they would find that the author had written very poorly, that neither his sense nor his method was just and proper, and that he had nothing in him but what was very common or trivial in his discourses on that subject.

Hence it comes to pass, that *Cario* and *Faber*, who were both bred up to labour, and unacquainted with the *sciences*, shall admire one of the *weekly papers*, or a *little pamphlet* that talks pertly on some critical or learned theme, because the matter is all strange and new to them, and they join to extol the writer to the skies; and for the same reason a *young academic* shall dwell upon a *Journal* or an *Observator* that treats of *trade* and *politics* in a dictatorial style, and shall be lavish in praise of the author. While at the same time persons well skilled in those different subjects, hear the impertinent tattle with a just contempt; for they know how weak and awkward many of those little diminutive discourses are; and that those very papers of *science*, *politics*, or *trade*, which were so much admired by the ignorant, are perhaps but very mean performances; though it

muſt be alſo confeſſed, there are ſome excellent eſſays in thoſe papers, and that upon ſcience as well as trade.

V. But there is a danger of miſtake in our *judgment of books* on the other hand alſo: for when we have made ourſelves *maſters of any particular theme of knowledge*, and ſurveyed it long on all ſides, there is perhaps ſcarce any writer on that ſubject who much entertains and pleaſes us afterwards, becauſe we find little or nothing new in him; and yet in a true judgment, perhaps his ſentiments are moſt proper and juſt, his explications clear, and his reaſonings ſtrong, and all the parts of the diſcourſe are well connected and ſet in a happy light; but we knew moſt of thoſe things before, and therefore they ſtrike us not, and we are in danger of diſcommending them.

Thus the *learned* and the *unlearned* have their ſeveral diſtinct dangers and prejudices ready to attend them in their judgment of the writings of men. Theſe which I have mentioned are a *ſpecimen* of them, and indeed but a *mere ſpecimen*; for the prejudices that warp our judgment aſide from truth are almoſt infinite and endleſs.

VI. Yet I cannot forbear to point out two or three more of theſe follies, that I may attempt ſomething toward the correction of them, or at leaſt to guard others againſt them.

There are ſome perſons of a forward and lively temper, and who are fond to intermeddle with all appearances of knowledge, will give their judgment on a book as ſoon as the title of it is mentioned, for they would not willingly ſeem ignorant of any thing that others know. And eſpecially if they happen to have any ſuperior character or poſſeſſions of this world, they fancy they have a right to talk freely upon every thing that ſtirs or appears, though they have no other pretence to this freedom. *Divito* is worth forty thouſand pounds; *Politulus* is a fine young gentleman, who ſparkles in all the ſhining things of dreſs and equipage; *Aulinus* is a ſmall attendant on a miniſter of ſtate, and is at court almoſt every day. Theſe three happened to meet in a

viſit, where an excellent book of warm and refined devotions lay in the window. *What dull ſtuff is here?* ſaid *Divito; I never read ſo much nonſenſe in one page in my life, nor would I give a ſhilling for a thouſand ſuch treatiſes.* *Aulinus*, though a courtier, and not uſed to ſpeak roughly, yet would not allow there was a line of good ſenſe in the book, and pronounced him a madman that wrote it in his ſecret retirement, and declared him a fool that publiſhed it after his death. *Politulus* had more manners than to differ from men of ſuch a rank and character, and therefore he ſneered at the devout expreſſions as he heard them read, and made the divine treatiſe a matter of ſcorn and ridicule; and yet it was well known, that neither this fine gentleman, nor the courtier, nor the man of wealth, had a grain of devotion in them beyond their horſes that waited at the door with their gilded chariots. But this is the way of the world: blind men will talk of the beauty of colours, and of the harmony or diſproportion of figures in painting; the deaf will prate of diſcords in muſic; and thoſe who have nothing to do with religion, will arraign the beſt treatiſe on divine ſubjects, though they do not underſtand the very language of the ſcripture, nor the common terms or phraſes uſed in *Chriſtianity*.

VII. I MIGHT here name another ſort of judges, who will ſet themſelves up to decide in favour of an author, or will pronounce him a mere blunderer, according to the company they have kept, and the judgment they have heard paſt upon a book by others of their own ſtamp or ſize, though they have no knowledge or taſte of the ſubject themſelves. Theſe with a fluent and voluble tongue become mere echoes of the praiſes or cenſures of other men. *Sonillus* happened to be in the room where the three gentlemen juſt mentioned gave out their thoughts ſo freely upon an admirable book of devotion: and two days afterwards he met with ſome friends of his where this book was the ſubject of converſation and praiſe. *Sonillus* wondered at their dulneſs, and repeated the jeſts which he had

heard caſt upon the weakneſs of the author. His knowledge of the book and his deciſion upon it was all from *hearſay*, for he had never ſeen it: and if he had read it through, he had no manner of right to judge about the things of religion, having no more knowledge, nor taſte of any thing of inward piety, than a hedgehog or a bear has of politeneſs.

When I had written theſe remarks, *Probus*, who knew all theſe four gentlemen, wiſhed they might have opportunity to read their own character as it is repreſented here. Alas! *Probus*, I fear it would do them very little good, though it may guard others againſt their folly: for there is never a one of them would find their own name in theſe characters if they read them, though all their acquaintance would acknowledge the features immediately, and ſee the perſons almoſt alive in the picture.

VIII. THERE is yet another miſchievous principle which prevails among ſome perſons in paſſing a judgment on the writings of others, and that is, when from the ſecret ſtimulations of *vanity*, *pride*, or *envy*, they deſpiſe a valuable book, and throw contempt upon it by wholeſale: and if you aſk them the reaſon of their ſevere cenſure, they will tell you perhaps, they have found a miſtake or two in it, or there are a few ſentiments or expreſſions not ſuited to their tooth and humour. *Bavius* cries down an admirable treatiſe of philoſophy, and ſays there is *Atheiſm* in it, becauſe there are a few ſentences that ſeem to ſuppoſe *brutes to be mere machines*. Under the ſame influence, *Momus* will not allow *Paradiſe Loſt* to be a good poem, becauſe he had read ſome flat and heavy lines in it, and he thought *Milton* had too much honour done him. It is a paltry humour that inclines a man to rail at any human performance becauſe it is not abſolutely perfect. *Horace* would give us a better example.

Sunt delicta quibus nos ignoviſſe velimus,
Nam neque chorda ſonum reddit quam vult manus et
mens,

Nec ſemper feriet quodcunque minabitur arcus:
Atque ubi plura nitent in carmine, non ego paucis
Offendar maculis, quas aut incuria fudit,
Aut humana parum cavit natura. Hor. de Art. Poet.

Thus Engliſhed.

Be not too rigidly cenſorious:
A ſtring may jar in the beſt maſter's hand,
And the moſt ſkilful archer miſs his aim:
So in a poem elegantly writ
I will not quarrel with a ſmall miſtake,
Such as our nature's frailty may excuſe. Roſcommon.

This noble tranſlator of *Horace*, whom I here cite, has a very honourable opinion of *Homer* in the main, yet he allows him to be juſtly cenſured for ſome groſſer ſpots and blemiſhes in him.

For who without averſion ever look'd
On holy garbage, though by Homer cook'd,
Whoſe railing heroes, and whoſe wounded gods,
Make ſome ſuſpect he ſnores as well as nods.

Such wiſe and juſt diſtinctions ought to be made when we paſs a judgment on mortal things, but *envy* condemns by wholeſale. *Envy* is a curſed plant; ſome fibres of it are rooted almoſt in every man's nature, and it works in a ſly and imperceptible manner, and that even in ſome perſons who in the main are men of wiſdom and piety. They know not how to bear the praiſes that are given to an ingenious author, eſpecially if he be *living* and of their *profeſſion*, and therefore they will, if poſſible, find ſome blemiſh in his writings, that they may nibble and bark at it. They will endeavour to diminiſh the honour of the beſt treatiſe that has been written on any ſubject, and to render it uſeleſs by their cenſures, rather than ſuffer their envy to lie aſleep, and the little miſtakes of that author to paſs unexpoſed. Perhaps they will commend the work in

general with a pretended air of candour, but paſs ſo many ſly and invidious remarks upon it afterward as ſhall effectually deſtroy all their cold and formal praiſes *.

IX. When a perſon feels any thing of this *invidious humour* working in him, he may by the following conſiderations attempt the correction of it. Let him think with himſelf how many are the *beauties* of ſuch an author whom he cenſures, in compariſon of his *blemiſhes*, and remember that it is a much more honourable and good-natured thing to find out peculiar beauties than faults: true and *undiſguiſed candour* is a much more amiable and divine talent than *accuſation*. Let him reflect again, what an eaſy matter it is to *find a miſtake* in all *human* authors, who are neceſſarily fallible and imperfect.

I confeſs where an author ſets up himſelf to ridicule *divine* writers and things ſacred, and yet aſſumes an air of ſovereignty and dictatorſhip, to exalt and almoſt deify all the *Pagan* ancients, and caſt his ſcorn upon all the moderns, eſpecially if they do but ſavour of miracles and the goſpel, it is fit the admirers of this author ſhould know that *nature and theſe ancients* are not the ſame, though ſome writers always unite them. Reaſon and nature never made theſe ancient *Heathens* their ſtandard, either of art or genius, of writing or heroiſm. Sir *Richard Steele*, in his little eſſay, called *The Chriſtian Hero*, has ſhewn our *Saviour* and St. *Paul* in a more glorious and tranſcendent light, than a *Virgil* or a *Homer* could do for their *Achilles*, *Ulyſſes*, or *Æneas*; and I am perſuaded, if *Moſes* and *David* had not been inſpired writers, theſe very men would have

* I grant when *wiſdom* itſelf cenſures a weak and fooliſh performance, it will paſs its ſevere ſentence, and yet with an air of candour, if the author has any thing valuable in him: but *envy* will oftentimes imitate the ſame favourable airs, in order to make its falſe cavils appear more juſt and credible, when it has a mind to ſnarl at ſome of the brighteſt performances of a human writer.

ranked them at leaſt with *Herodotus* and *Horace*, if not given them the ſuperior place.

But where an author has many beauties conſiſtent with virtue, piety, and truth, let not little critics exalt themſelves, and ſhower down their ill-nature upon him, without bounds or meaſure; but rather ſtretch their own powers of ſoul till they write a treatiſe ſuperior to that which they condemn. This is the nobleſt and ſureſt manner of ſuppreſſing what they cenſure.

A little wit, or a little learning, with a good degree of vanity and ill-nature, will teach a man to pour out whole pages of remark and reproach upon one real or fancied miſtake of a great and good author: and this may be dreſſed up by the ſame talents, and made entertaining enough to the world, who loves reproach and ſcandal: but if the remarker would but once make this attempt, and try to *outſhine the author by writing a better book on the ſame ſubject*, he would ſoon be convinced of his own inſufficiency, and perhaps might learn to judge more juſtly and favourably of the performance of other men. A *cobler* or a *ſhoemaker* may find ſome little fault with the latchet of a ſhoe that an *Apelles* had painted, and perhaps with juſtice too; when the whole figure and portraiture is ſuch as none but *Apelles* could paint. Every poor low genius may cavil at what the richeſt and the nobleſt hath performed: but it is a ſign of *envy* and *malice*, added to the *littleneſs* and *poverty of genius*, when ſuch a cavil becomes a ſufficient reaſon to pronounce at once againſt a bright author and a whole valuable treatiſe.

X. ANOTHER, and that a very frequent fault in paſſing a judgment upon books is this, that perſons ſpread the ſame praiſes or the ſame reproaches over a whole treatiſe, and all the chapters in it, which are due only to ſome of them. They judge as it were by wholeſale, without making a due diſtinction between the ſeveral parts or ſections of the performance; and this is ready to lead thoſe who hear them talk into a dangerous miſtake. *Florus* is a great and juſt admirer of the late archbiſhop of *Cambray*, and mightily com-

mends every thing he has written, and will allow no blemiſh in him: whereas the writings of that excellent man are not all of a piece, nor are thoſe very books of his, which have a good number of beautiful and valuable ſentiments in them, to be recommended throughout, or all at once without diſtinction. There is his *Demonſtration of the Exiſtence and Attributes of God*, which has juſtly gained an univerſal eſteem, for bringing down ſome new and noble thoughts of the wiſdom of the creation to the underſtanding of the unlearned, and they are ſuch as well deſerve the peruſal of the men of ſcience, perhaps as far as the *50th ſection*; but there are many of the following *ſections* which are very weakly written, and ſome of them built upon an enthuſiaſtical and miſtaken ſcheme, a-kin to the peculiar opinions of father *Malebranche*; ſuch as Sect. 51. 53. *That we know the finite only by the ideas of the infinite.* Sect. 55. 60. *That the ſuperior reaſon in man is God himſelf acting in him.* Sect. 61, 62. *That the idea of unity cannot be taken from creatures, but from God only:* and ſeveral of his Sections, from 65. to 68. upon the doctrine of *liberty*, ſeem to be inconſiſtent. *Again*, toward the end of his book, he ſpends more time and pains than are needful in refuting the *Epicurean* fancy of atoms moving eternally through infinite changes, which might be done effectually in a much ſhorter and better way.

So in his *Poſthumous* Eſſays, and his *Letters*, there are many admirable thoughts in practical and experimental religion, and very beautiful and divine ſentiments in devotion; but ſometimes in large paragraphs, or in whole chapters together, you find him in the clouds of *myſtic* divinity, and he never deſcends within the reach of common ideas or common ſenſe.

But remember this alſo, that there are but few ſuch authors as this great man, who talks ſo very weakly ſometimes, and yet in other places is ſo much ſuperior to the greateſt part of writers.

There are other inſtances of this kind where men of good ſenſe in the main ſet up for judges, but they carry

too many of their paſſions about them, and then like lovers, they are in rapture at the name of their fair idol; they laviſh out all their incenſe upon that ſhrine, and cannot bear the thought of admitting a blemiſh in them.

You ſhall hear *Altiſons* not only admire *Caſimire* of *Poland* in his lyrics, as the utmoſt purity and perfection of *Latin* poeſy, but he will allow nothing in him to be extravagant or faulty, and will vindicate every line: nor can I much wonder at it, when I have heard him pronounce *Lucan* the beſt of the ancient *Latins*, and idolize his very weakneſſes and miſtakes. I will readily acknowledge the Odes of *Caſimire* to have more ſpirit and force, more magnificence and fire in them, and in twenty places ariſe to more dignity and beauty than I could ever meet with in any of our modern poets: yet I am afraid to ſay, that *Pala ſutilis e luce* has dignity enough in it for *a robe made for the Almighty*, Lib. 4. Od. 7. l. 37. or that the *Man of Virtue* in Od. 3. l. 44. *under the ruins of heaven and earth, will bear up the fragments of the fallen world with a comely wound on his ſhoulders.*

——— late ruenti
Subjiciens ſua colla cælo
Mundum decoro vulnere ſulciet;
Interque cæli fragmina.

Yet I muſt needs confeſs alſo, that it is hardly poſſible a man ſhould riſe to ſo exalted and ſublime a vein of poeſy as *Caſimire*, who is not in danger now and then of ſuch extravagancies: but ſtill they ſhould not be admired or defended, if we pretend to paſs a juſt judgment on the writings of the greateſt men.

Milton is a noble genius, and the world agrees to confeſs it; his poem of *Paradiſe Loſt* is a glorious performance, and rivals the moſt famous pieces of antiquity; but that reader muſt be deeply prejudiced in favour of the poet, who can imagine him equal to himſelf through all that work. Neither the ſublime ſentiments, nor dignity of numbers, nor force or beauty of

expreſſion are equally maintained, even in all thoſe parts which require grandeur or beauty, force or harmony. I cannot but conſent to Mr. *Dryden*'s opinion, though I will not uſe his words, that for ſome ſcores of lines together, there is a coldneſs and flatneſs, and almoſt a perfect abſence of that ſpirit of poeſy which breathes, and lives, and flames in other pages.

XI. WHEN you hear any perſon pretending to give his judgment of a book, conſider with yourſelf whether he be a *capable* judge, or whether he may not lie under ſome unhappy bias or *prejudice*, for or againſt it, or whether he has made a ſufficient inquiry to form his juſteſt ſentiments upon it.

Though he be a man of good ſenſe, yet he is uncapable of paſſing a true judgment of a particular book, if he be not well acquainted with the ſubject of which it treats, *and the manner* in which it is written, be it verſe or proſe; or if he hath not had opportunity or leiſure to look ſufficiently into the writing itſelf.

Again, though he be never ſo capable of judging on all other accounts, by the knowledge of the ſubject, and of the book itſelf, yet you are to conſider alſo, whether there be any thing in the author, in his manner, in his language, in his opinions, and his particular party, which may warp the ſentiments of him that judgeth, to think well or ill of the treatiſe, and to paſs too favourable or too ſevere a ſentence concerning it.

If you find that he is either an unfit judge becauſe of his ignorance, or becauſe of his prejudices, his judgment of that book ſhould go for nothing. *Philographo* is a good divine, an uſeful preacher, and an approved expoſitor of ſcripture, but he never had a taſte for any of the polite learning of the age; he was fond of every thing that appeared in a devout dreſs, but all verſe was alike to him: he told me laſt week there was a very fine book of poems publiſhed on the three Chriſtian graces, *Faith*, *Hope*, and *Charity*; and a moſt elegant piece of oratory on the four laſt things, *Death*, *Judgment*, *Heaven*, and *Hell*. Do you think I ſhall buy either of thoſe books merely on *Philographo*'s recommendation?

CHAP. VI.

Of living Inſtructions and Lectures, of Teachers and Learners.

I.

THERE are few perſons of ſo penetrating a genius, and ſo juſt a judgment, as to be capable of learning the arts and ſciences without the aſſiſtance of *teachers*. There is ſcarce any ſcience ſo ſafely and ſo ſpeedily learned, even by the nobleſt genius and the beſt books, without a tutor. His aſſiſtance is abſolutely neceſſary for moſt perſons, and it is very uſeful for all beginners. *Books* are a ſort of *dumb teachers*, they point out the way to learning; but if we labour under any doubt or miſtake, they cannot anſwer ſudden queſtions, or explain preſent doubts and difficulties: this is properly the work of a *living inſtructor*.

II. THERE are very few tutors who are ſufficiently furniſhed with ſuch *univerſal learning*, as to ſuſtain all the parts and provinces of inſtruction. The ſciences are numerous, and many of them lie far wide of each other; and it is beſt to enjoy the inſtruction of two or three tutors at leaſt, in order to run through the whole *encyclopedia*, or *circle of ſciences*, where it may be obtained; then we may expect that each will teach the few parts of learning which are committed to his care in greater perfection. But where this advantage cannot be had with convenience, one great man muſt ſupply the place of two or three common inſtructors.

III. IT is not ſufficient that inſtructors be competently ſkilled in thoſe *ſciences* which they profeſs and teach; but they ſhould have ſkill alſo in the *art or method of teaching*, and patience in the *practice* of it.

It is a great unhappineſs indeed when perſons by a ſpirit of party, or faction, or intereſt, or by purchaſe, are ſet up for tutors, who have neither due knowledge of ſcience, nor ſkill in the way of communication,

And, alas! there are others, who with all their ignorance and inſufficiency, have ſelf-admiration and effrontery enough to ſet up themſelves: and the poor pupils fare accordingly, and grow lean in their underſtandings.

And let it be obſerved alſo, there are ſome very learned men who know much themſelves, but have not the talent of communicating their own knowledge; or elſe they are lazy, and will take no pains at it. Either they have an obſcure and perplexed way of talking, or they ſhew their learning uſeleſsly, and make a long periphraſis on every word of the book they explain, or they cannot condeſcend to young beginners, or they run preſently into the elevated parts of the ſcience, becauſe it gives themſelves greater pleaſure, or they are ſoon angry and impatient, and cannot bear with a few impertinent queſtions of a young, inquiſitive, and ſprightly genius; or elſe they ſkim over a ſcience in a very ſlight and ſuperficial ſurvey, and never lead their diſciples into the depths of it.

IV. A GOOD tutor ſhould have *characters* and *qualifications very different from all theſe.* He is ſuch a one as both can and will apply himſelf with diligence and concern, and indefatigable patience to effect what he undertakes; to teach his diſciples, and ſee that they learn; to adapt his way and method as near as may be to the various diſpoſitions, as well as to the capacities of thoſe whom he inſtructs, and to inquire often into their progreſs and improvement.

And he ſhould take particular care of his own temper and conduct, that there be nothing in him or about him which may be of ill example; nothing that may ſavour of a haughty temper, a mean and ſordid ſpirit; nothing that may expoſe him to the averſion or to the contempt of his ſcholars, or create a prejudice in their minds againſt him and his inſtructions: but, if poſſible, he ſhould have ſo much of a natural candour and ſweetneſs mixt with all the improvements of learning, as might convey knowledge into the minds of his diſciples with a ſort of gentle inſinuation and ſovereign delight,

and may tempt them into the higheſt improvements of their reaſon by a reſiſtleſs and inſenſible force. But I ſhall have occaſion to ſay more on this ſubject, when I come to ſpeak more directly of the *methods of the communication of knowledge*.

V. THE *learner* ſhould attend with conſtancy and care on all the inſtructions of his *tutor*; and if he happens to be at any time unavoidably hindered, he muſt endeavour to retrieve the loſs by double induſtry for time to come. He ſhould always recollect and review his lectures, read over ſome other author or authors upon the ſame ſubject, confer upon it with his inſtructor or with his aſſociates, and write down the cleareſt reſult of his preſent thoughts, reaſonings, and inquiries, which he may have recourſe to hereafter, either to re-examine them and to apply them to proper uſe, or to improve them further to his own advantage.

VI. A *STUDENT* ſhould never ſatisfy himſelf with bare attendance on the lectures of his *tutor*, unleſs he clearly takes up his ſenſe and meaning, and underſtands the things which he teaches. A *young diſciple* ſhould behave himſelf ſo well as to gain the affection and the ear of his *inſtructor*, that upon every occaſion he may with the utmoſt freedom aſk queſtions, and talk over his own ſentiments, his doubts and difficulties with him, and in a humble and modeſt manner deſire the ſolution of them.

VII. LET the *learner* endeavour to maintain an honourable opinion of his *inſtructor*, and heedfully liſten to his *inſtructions*, as one willing to be led by a more experienced guide: and though he is not bound to fall in with every ſentiment of his tutor, yet he ſhould ſo far comply with him, as to reſolve upon a juſt conſideration of the matter, and try and examine it thoroughly with an honeſt heart, before he preſume to determine againſt him. And then it ſhould be done with great modeſty, with a humble jealouſy of himſelf, and apparent unwillingneſs to differ from his tutor, if the force of argument and truth did not conſtrain him.

VIII. It is a frequent and growing folly in our age, *that pert young diſciples ſoon fancy themſelves wiſer than thoſe who teach them*: at the firſt view, or upon a very little thought, they can diſcern the inſignificancy, weakneſs, and miſtake of what their teacher aſſerts. The youth of our day, by an early petulancy, and pretended liberty of thinking for themſelves, dare reject at once, and that with a ſort of ſcorn, all thoſe ſentiments and doctrines which their teachers have determined, perhaps after long and repeated conſideration, after years of mature ſtudy, careful obſervation, and much prudent experience.

IX. It is true, teachers and maſters are not infallible, nor are they always in the right; and it muſt be acknowledged, it is a matter of ſome difficulty for younger minds to maintain a juſt and ſolemn veneration for the *authority and advice of their parents, and the inſtructions of their tutors*, and yet at the ſame time to ſecure to themſelves a *juſt freedom in their own thoughts*. We are ſometimes too ready to imbibe all their ſentiments without examination, if we reverence and love them; or, on the other hand, if we take all freedom to conteſt their opinions, we are ſometimes tempted to caſt off that love and reverence to their perſons which God and nature dictate. Youth is ever in danger of theſe two extremes.

X. But I think I may ſafely conclude thus: though the authority of a teacher muſt not abſolutely determine the judgment of his pupil, yet young and raw and unexperienced learners ſhould pay all proper deference that can be to the inſtructions of their parents and teachers, ſhort of abſolute ſubmiſſion to their dictates. Yet ſtill we muſt maintain this, that they ſhould never receive any opinion into their aſſent, whether it be conformable or contrary to the tutor's mind, without ſufficient evidence of it firſt given to their own reaſoning powers.

CHAP. VII.

Of learning a LANGUAGE.

THE firſt thing required in *reading an author*, or in *hearing lectures of a tutor* is, that you well underſtand the *language* in which they write or ſpeak. *Living languages*, or ſuch as are the native tongue of any nation in the preſent age, are more eaſily learnt and taught by a few rules, and much familiar converſe, joined to the reading ſome proper authors. The *dead languages* are ſuch as ceaſe to be ſpoken in any nation; and even theſe are more eaſy to be taught (as far as may be) in that method wherein *living languages* are beſt learnt, *i. e.* partly by rule, and partly by rote or cuſtom. And it may not be improper in this place to mention a very few *directions* for that purpoſe.

I. *BEGIN with the moſt neceſſary and moſt general obſervations and rules which belong to that language, compiled in the form of a grammar*; and theſe are but few in moſt languages. The regular declenſions and variation of nouns and verbs ſhould be early and thoroughly learnt by heart, together with twenty or thirty of the plaineſt and moſt neceſſary rules of *ſyntax*.

But let it be obſerved, that in almoſt all languages ſome of the very commoneſt *nouns* and *verbs* have many irregularities in them: ſuch are the common *auxiliary* verbs *to be* and *to have*, *to do* and *to be done*, &c. The *comparatives* and *ſuperlatives* of the words *good*, *bad*, *great*, *much*, *ſmall*, *little*, &c. and theſe ſhould be learnt among the firſt rules and variations, becauſe they continually occur.

But as to other words which are leſs frequent, let but few of the *anomalies* or irregularities of the tongue be taught among the *general rules* to young beginners. Theſe will better come in afterwards to be learnt by advanced ſcholars, in a way of notes on the rules, as in the *Latin* grammar called the *Oxford Grammar*, or

in *Ruddiman*'s notes on his *Rudiments*, &c. Or they may be learnt by examples alone, when they do occur; or by a larger and more complete ſyſtem of grammar, which deſcends to the more particular forms of ſpeech: ſo the *heteroclite* nouns of the *Latin* tongue, which are taught in the ſchool-book called *Que Genus*, ſhould not be touched in the firſt learning of the rudiments of the tongue.

II. As the *grammar* by which you learn any tongue ſhould be very ſhort at firſt, ſo *it muſt be written in a tongue with which you are well acquainted*, and which is very familiar to you. Therefore I much prefer even the common *Engliſh Accidence* (as it is called) to any *grammar* whatſoever written in *Latin* for this end. The *Engliſh Accidence* has doubtleſs many faults: but thoſe editions of it which were printed ſince the year 1728, under the correction of a learned profeſſor, are the beſt; or the *Engliſh Rudiments* of the *Latin* tongue, by that learned *North Briton* Mr. *Ruddiman*, which are perhaps the moſt uſeful books of this kind which I am acquainted with; eſpecially becauſe I would not depart too far from the ancient and common forms of teaching, which ſeveral good grammarians have done, to the great detriment of ſuch lads as have been removed to other ſchools.

The tireſome and unreaſonable method of learning the *Latin tongue* by a *grammar* with *Latin* rules, would appear even to thoſe maſters who teach it ſo, in its proper colours of abſurdity and ridicule, if thoſe very maſters would attempt to learn the *Chineſe* or *Arabic* tongue, by a grammar written in the *Arabic* or the *Chineſe language*. Mr. *Clark*, of *Hull*, has ſaid enough in a few pages of the preface to his new grammar 1723, to make that practice appear very irrational and improper; though he has ſaid it in ſo warm and angry a manner that it has kindled Mr. *Ruddiman* to write againſt him, and to ſay what can be ſaid to vindicate a practice, which, I think, is utterly indefenſible.

III. *AT the ſame time when you begin the rules begin alſo the practice.* As for inſtance, when you decline

muſa, muſæ, read and conſtrue the ſame day ſome eaſy *Latin* author by the help of a tutor, or with ſome *Engliſh* tranſlation: chuſe ſuch a book whoſe ſtyle is ſimple, and the ſubject of diſcourſe is very plain, obvious, and not hard to be underſtood; many little books have been compoſed with this view, as *Corderius*'s *Colloquies*, ſome of *Eraſmus*'s little writings, the ſayings of the wiſe men of *Greece*, *Cato*'s moral diſtichs, and the reſt which are collected at the end of Mr. *Ruddiman*'s *Engliſh* grammar, or the *Latin Teſtament* of *Caſtellio*'s tranſlation, which is accounted the pureſt *Latin*, &c. Theſe are very proper upon this occaſion, together with *Æſop*'s and *Phædrus*'s *Fables*, and little ſtories, and the common and daily affairs of domeſtic life, written in the *Latin* tongue. But let the higher poets, and orators, and hiſtorians, and other writers whoſe language is more laboured, and whoſe ſenſe is more remote from common life, be rather kept out of ſight, till there be ſome proficiency made in the language.

It is ſtrange that maſters ſhould teach children ſo early *Tully*'s *Epiſtles*, or *Orations*, or the *poems of Ovid or Virgil*, whoſe ſenſe is oftentimes difficult to find, becauſe of the great tranſpoſition of the words; and when they have found the grammatical ſenſe, they have very little uſe of it, becauſe they have ſcarce any notion of the ideas and deſign of the writer, it being ſo remote from the knowledge of a child; whereas little common ſtories and colloquies, and the rules of a child's behaviour, and ſuch obvious ſubjects, will much better aſſiſt the memory of the words by their acquaintance with the things.

IV. Here it may be uſeful alſo to appoint the learner *to get by heart the more common and uſeful words*, both *nouns* and *adjectives*, *pronouns* and *verbs*, out of ſome well-formed and judicious *vocabulary*. This will furniſh him with names for the moſt familiar ideas.

V. As ſoon as ever the learner is capable, *let the tutor converſe with him in the tongue* which is to be learned, if it be a living language, or if it be *Latin*, which

is the living language of the learned world: thus he will acquaint himſelf a little with it by *rote* as well as by *rule*, and by living practice as well as by reading the writings of the dead. For if a child of two years old by this method learns to ſpeak his mother-tongue, I am ſure the ſame method will greatly aſſiſt and facilitate the learning of any other language to thoſe who are older.

VI. Let *the chief leſſons and the chief exerciſes of ſchools, v. c.* where *Latin* is learnt (at leaſt for the firſt year or more), *be the nouns, verbs, and general rules of ſyntax*, together with a *mere tranſlation out of ſome* Latin *author into* Engliſh; and let ſcholars be employed and examined by their teacher daily, in reducing the words to their original or theme, to the firſt caſe of nouns or firſt tenſe of verbs, and giving an account of their formations and changes, their *ſyntax* and dependencies, which is called *parſing*. This is a moſt uſeful exerciſe to lead boys into a complete and thorough knowledge of what they are doing.

The *Engliſh tranſlations*, which the learner has made, ſhould be well corrected by the maſter, and then they ſhould be tranſlated back again for the next day's exerciſe by the child into *Latin*, while the *Latin* author is with-held from him: but he ſhould have the *Latin* words given him in their firſt caſe and tenſe; and ſhould never be left to ſeek them himſelf from a dictionary: and the neater he tranſlates it to the words of the author whence he derives his *Engliſh*, the more ſhould the child be commended. Thus will he gain ſkill in two languages at once. I think Mr. *Clark* has done good ſervice to the public by his tranſlations of *Latin* books for this end.

But let the fooliſh cuſtom of employing every ſilly boy to make *themes* or *declamations* and *verſes* upon moral ſubjects in a ſtrange tongue, before he underſtands common ſenſe even in his own language, be abandoned and caſhiered for ever.

VII. As the learner improves, let him *acquaint himſelf with the anomalous words*, the *irregular declenſion of*

nouns and verbs, the more *uncommon connections of words in ſyntax*, and the *exceptions to the general rules of grammar*; but let them all be reduced, as far as poſſible, to thoſe ſeveral original and general rules which he has learned, as the proper rank and place to which they belong.

VIII. While he is doing this, it may be *proper for him to converſe with authors which are a little more difficult*, with *hiſtorians*, *orators*, and *poets*, &c. but let his tutor inform him of the *Roman* or *Greek* cuſtoms which occur therein. Let the lad then tranſlate ſome parts of them into his mother-tongue, or into ſome other well-known language, and thence back again into the original language of the author. But let the *verſe* be tranſlated into *proſe*, for *poeſy* does not belong to *grammar*.

IX. By this time he will be able to *acquaint himſelf with ſome of the ſpecial emphaſis of ſpeech*, and the *peculiar idioms of the tongue*. He ſhould be taught alſo the ſpecial *beauties* and *ornaments* of the language: and this may be done partly by the help of authors who have collected ſuch *idioms*, and caſt them into an eaſy method, and partly by the judicious remarks which his inſtructor may make upon the authors which he reads, whereſoever ſuch peculiarities of ſpeech or ſpecial elegancies occur.

X. Though the labour of learning all the *leſſons by heart*, that are borrowed from *poetical authors*, which they conſtrue, is an unjuſt and unneceſſary impoſition upon the learner, yet he muſt take the pains to *commit to memory the moſt neceſſary*, *if not all the common rules of grammar*, with an example or two under each of them: and ſome of the ſelect and moſt uſeful periods or ſentences in the *Latin* or *Greek* author which he reads, may be learnt by heart, together with ſome of the choicer leſſons out of their poets; and ſometimes whole epiſodes out of *heroic* poems, *&c.* as well as whole odes among the *lyrics* may deſerve this honour.

XI. Let this be always carefully obſerved, that *the learners perfectly underſtand the ſenſe as well as the lan-*

guage of all thoſe rules, leſſons, or paragraphs which they attempt to commit to memory. Let the teacher poſſeſs them of their true meaning, and then the labour will become eaſy and pleaſant: whereas to impoſe on a child to get by heart *a long ſcroll of unknown phraſes or words, without any ideas under them,* is a piece of uſeleſs tyranny, a cruel impoſition, and a practice fitter for a jack-daw or a parrot, than for any thing that wears the ſhape of a man.

XII. And here, I think, I have a fair occaſion given me to conſider that *queſtion* which has been often debated in converſation, *viz. Whether the teaching of a ſchool full of boys to learn* Latin *by the Heathen poets,* as *Ovid* in his *Epiſtles,* and the ſilly fables of his *Metamorphoſes, Horace, Juvenal,* and *Martial,* in their impure odes, ſatires, and epigrams, &c. is ſo proper and agreeable a practice in a *Chriſtian* country?

XIII. (1.) *I GRANT the language and ſtyle of thoſe men who wrote in their own native tongue, muſt be more pure and perfect* in ſome nice elegancies and peculiarities, than modern writers of other nations who have imitated them; and it is owned alſo, that the beauties of their poeſy may much excel: but in either of theſe things, boys cannot be ſuppoſed to be much improved or injured by one or the other.

XIV. (2.) It ſhall be confeſt too, that *modern poets, in every living language, have brought into their works ſo many words, epithets, phraſes, and metaphors,* from the *Heathen* fables and ſtories of their gods and heroes, that in order to underſtand theſe modern writers, it is neceſſary to know a little of thoſe ancient follies: but it may be anſwered, that a good dictionary, or ſuch a book as the *Pantheon,* or hiſtory of thoſe *Gentile deities,* &c. may give ſufficient information of thoſe ſtories, ſo far as they are neceſſary and uſeful to ſchool-boys.

XV. (3.) I will grant yet further, that lads who are deſigned to make great ſcholars or divines, may, by reading theſe *Heathen* poets, be taught better to *underſtand the writings of the ancient fathers againſt the Heathen religion;* and they learn here *what ridiculous fooleries the*

Gentile nations believed as the articles of their faith, *what wretched and foul idolatries they indulged and practiſed as duties of religion, for want of the light of divine revelation.* But this perhaps may be learnt as well either by the *Pantheon*, or ſome other collection, at ſchool; or after they have left the ſchool, they may read what their own inclinations lead them to, and whatſoever of this kind may be really uſeful for them.

XVI. But the great queſtion is, *Whether all theſe advantages which have been mentioned, will compenſate for the long months and years that are waſted among their incredible and trifling romances, their falſe and ſhameful ſtories of the gods and goddeſſes and their amours, and the lewd heroes and vicious poets of the Heathen world?* Can theſe idle and ridiculous tales be of any real and ſolid advantage in human life? Do they not too often defile the mind with vain, miſchievous, and impure ideas? Do they not ſtick long upon the fancy, and leave an unhappy influence upon youth? Do they not tincture the imagination with folly and vice very early, and pervert it from all that is good and holy?

XVII. Upon the whole ſurvey of things it is my opinion, that for almoſt all boys who learn this tongue, it would be much ſafer to be taught *Latin poeſy* (as ſoon and aſfar as they can need it) from thoſe excellent tranſlations of *David*'s *Pſalms*, which are given us by *Buchanan* in the various meaſures of *Horace*; and the lower claſſes had better read Dr. *Johnſton*'s tranſlation of theſe pſalms, another elegant writer of the *Scots* nation, inſtead of *Ovid*'s *Epiſtles*; for he has turned the ſame pſalms, perhaps with greater elegancy, into *elegiac* verſe, whereof the learned *W. Benſon*, Eſq. has lately publiſhed a noble edition, and I hear that theſe pſalms are honoured with an increaſing uſe in the ſchools of *Holland* and *Scotland*. A ſtanza, or a couplet of theſe writers would now and then ſtick upon the minds of youth, and would furniſh them infinitely better with pious and moral thoughts, and do ſomething towards making them good men and Chriſtians.

XVIII. A LITTLE book collected from the *Pſalms* of both theſe tranſlators, *Buchanan* and *Johnſton*, and a few other *Chriſtian* poets, would be of excellent uſe for ſchools to begin their inſtructions in *Latin poeſy*; and I am well aſſured this would be richly ſufficient for all thoſe in lower rank, who never deſign a learned profeſſion, and yet caſtom has fooliſhly bound them to learn that language.

But leſt it ſhould be thought hard to caſt *Horace* and *Virgil*, *Ovid* and *Juvenal*, entirely out of the ſchools, I add, if here and there a few lyric odes, or pieces of ſatires, or ſome epiſodes of *heroic* verſe, with here and there an epigram of *Martial*, all which ſhall be clear and pure from the ſtains of vice and impiety, and which may inſpire the mind with noble ſentiments, fire the fancy with bright and warm ideas, or teach leſſons of morality and prudence, were choſen out of thoſe ancient *Roman* writers for the uſe of the ſchools, and were collected and printed in one moderate volume, or two at the moſt, it would be abundantly ſufficient proviſion out of the *Roman* poets for the inſtruction of boys in all that is neceſſary in that age of life.

Surely *Juvenal* himſelf would not have the face to vindicate the maſters who teach boys his 6th *ſatire*, and many paragraphs of ſeveral others, when he himſelf has charged us,

Nil dictu fœdum, viſuque hæc limina tangat
Intra quæ puer eſt. Sat. 14.

Suffer no lewdneſs, nor indecent ſpeech,
Th' apartment of the tender youth to reach. Dryden.

Thus far in anſwer to the foregoing queſtion.

But I retire; for Mr. *Clark*, of *Hull*, in his treatiſe of *Education*, and Mr. *Philips*, preceptor to the duke of *Cumberland*, have given more excellent directions for learning *Latin*.

XIX. WHEN a language is learnt, *if it be of any uſe at all, it is pity it ſhould be forgotten again.* It is

proper, therefore, to take all juſt opportunities *to read ſomething frequently in that language*, when other neceſſary and important ſtudies will give you leave. As in learning any tongue, *dictionaries* which contain *words* and *phraſes* ſhould be always at hand, ſo they ſhould be ever kept within reach by perſons who would remember a tongue which they have learnt. Nor ſhould we at any time content ourſelves with a doubtful gueſs at the ſenſe or meaning of any words which occur, but conſult the *dictionary*, which may give us certain information, and thus ſecure us from miſtake. It is mere ſloth which makes us content ourſelves with uncertain gueſſes; and indeed this is neither ſafe nor uſeful for perſons who would learn any language or ſcience, or have a deſire to retain what they have acquired.

XX. When you have learnt one or many languages ever ſo perfectly, take heed of priding yourſelf in theſe acquiſitions: they are but mere treaſures of *words*, or inſtruments of true and ſolid knowledge, and whoſe chief deſign is to lead us into an acquaintance with *things*, or to enable us the more eaſily to convey thoſe ideas or that knowledge to others. An acquaintance with the various tongues is nothing elſe but a relief againſt the miſchief which the building of *Babel* introduced: and were I maſter of as many languages as were ſpoken at *Babel*, I ſhould make but a poor pretence to true learning or knowledge, if I had not clear and diſtinct *ideas*, and uſeful notions in my head under the *words* which my tongue could pronounce. Yet ſo unhappy a thing is human nature, that this ſort of knowledge of ſounds and ſyllables is ready to puff up the mind with vanity, more than the moſt valuable and ſolid improvements of it. The pride of a grammarian, or a critic, generally exceeds that of a philoſopher.

CHAP. VIII.

Of inquiring into the Senſe and Meaning of any Writer or Speaker, and eſpecially the ſenſe of the Sacred Writings.

IT is a great unhappineſs that there is ſuch an ambiguity in words and forms of ſpeech, that the ſame ſentence may be drawn into different ſignifications; whereby it comes to paſs, that it is difficult ſometimes for the reader exactly to hit upon the ideas which the writer or ſpeaker had in his mind. Some of the beſt *rules* to direct us herein are ſuch as theſe.

I. BE well acquainted with the *tongue* itſelf, or *language* wherein the author's mind is expreſt. Learn not only the true meaning of each word, but the ſenſe which thoſe words obtain when placed in ſuch a particular *ſituation* and *order*. Acquaint yourſelf with the peculiar *power and emphaſis* of the ſeveral modes of ſpeech, and the various idioms of the tongue. The *ſecondary ideas* which cuſtom has ſuperadded to many words, ſhould alſo be known, as well as the particular and *primary meaning* of them, if we would underſtand any writer. See *Logic*, Part I. Chap. 4. §. 3.

II. CONSIDER the ſignification of thoſe words and phraſes, more eſpecially in the ſame nation, or near the ſame *age* in which that writer lived, and in what ſenſe they are uſed by authors of the *ſame nation, opinion, ſect, party*, &c.

Upon this account, we may learn to interpret ſeveral phraſes of the New Teſtament out of that verſion of the *Hebrew* Bible into *Greek*, which is called the *Septuagint*; for though that verſion be very imperfect and defective in many things, yet it ſeems to me evident, that the holy writers of the New Teſtament made uſe of that verſion many times in their citation of texts out of the Bible.

III. COMPARE the words and phraſes in *one place of an author*, with the ſame or kindred words and

phraſes uſed in *other places* of the ſame author, which are generally called *parallel places;* and as one expreſſion explains another which is like it, ſo ſometimes a contrary expreſſion will explain its contrary. Remember always, that a writer beſt interprets himſelf; and as we believe the Holy Spirit to be the ſupreme agent in the writings of the Old Teſtament and the New, he can beſt explain himſelf. Hence that theological rule ariſes, that *ſcripture is the beſt interpreter of ſcripture;* and therefore *concordances*, which ſhew us parallel places, are of excellent uſe for interpretation.

IV. CONSIDER the *ſubject* of which the author is treating, and by comparing other places where he treats of the *ſame ſubject*, you may learn his ſenſe in the place which you are reading, though ſome of the terms which he uſes in thoſe two places may be very different.

And on the other hand, if the author uſes the ſame words where the *ſubject* of which he treats is *not juſt the ſame*, you cannot learn his ſenſe by comparing thoſe two places, though the mere words may ſeem to agree: for ſome authors, when they are treating of a quite *different ſubject*, may uſe perhaps the *ſame words* in a very *different ſenſe*, as St. *Paul* does the words, *faith*, and *law*, and *righteouſneſs*.

V. OBSERVE the *ſcope* and *deſign* of the writer: inquire into his aim and end in that book, or ſection, or paragraph, which will help to explain particular ſentences: for we ſuppoſe a wiſe and judicious writer directs his expreſſions generally toward his deſigned end.

VI. WHEN an author ſpeaks of any ſubject *occaſionally*, let his ſenſe be explained by thoſe places where he treats of it *diſtinctly* and profeſſedly: where he treats of any ſubject in *myſtical* or *metaphorical* terms, explain them by other places where he treats of the ſame ſubject in terms that are *plain* and *literal:* where he ſpeaks in an *oratorical*, *affecting*, or *perſuaſive* way, let this be explained by other places where he treats of the ſame theme in a *doctrinal* or *inſtructive* way: where the author ſpeaks more ſtrictly, and *particularly*

on any theme, it will explain the more looſe and *general* expreſſions: where he treats more *largely*, it will explain the *ſhorter hints* and *brief intimations*: and whereſoever he writes more *obſcurely*, ſearch out ſome more *perſpicuous* paſſages in the ſame writer, by which to determine the ſenſe of that obſcurer language.

VII. CONSIDER not only the *perſon* who is introduced *ſpeaking*, but the *perſons to whom* the ſpeech is directed, the circumſtances of *time* and *place*, the *temper and ſpirit of the ſpeaker*, as well as the *temper and ſpirit of the hearers*: in order to interpret ſcripture well, there needs a good acquaintance with the *Jewiſh* cuſtoms, ſome knowledge of the ancient *Roman* and *Greek* times and manners, which ſometimes ſtrike a ſtrange and ſurpriſing light upon paſſages which before were very obſcure.

VIII. IN particular propoſitions, the ſenſe of an author may be ſometimes known by the *inferences* which he draws from them; and all thoſe ſenſes may be excluded which will not allow of that inference.

NOTE, This *rule* indeed is not always certain in reading and interpreting human authors, becauſe they may miſtake in drawing their inferences; but in explaining ſcripture it is a *ſure rule*; for the ſacred and inſpired writers always make juſt inferences from their own propoſitions. Yet even in them we muſt take heed we do not miſtake an alluſion for an inference, which is many times introduced almoſt in the ſame manner.

IX. IF it be a matter of controverſy, the true ſenſe of the author is ſometimes known by the *objections* that are brought againſt it. So we may be well aſſured, the Apoſtle ſpeaks againſt our *juſtification in the ſight of God by our own works of holineſs*, in the 3*d*, 4*th*, and 5*th* chapters of the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, becauſe of the *objection* brought againſt him in the beginning of the 6*th* chapter, *viz. What ſhall we ſay then? ſhall we continue in ſin that grace may abound?* Which objection could never have been raiſed, if he had been proving our *juſtification by our own works of righteouſneſs*.

X. In matters of diſpute, take heed of *warping* the ſenſe of the writer to *your own opinion*, by any latent prejudices of *ſelf-love* and a *party-ſpirit*. It is this reigning principle of prejudice and party, that has given ſuch a variety of ſenſes both to the ſacred writers and others, which would never have come into the mind of the reader, if he had not laboured under ſome ſuch prepoſſeſſions.

XI. For the ſame reaſon take heed of the prejudices of *paſſion*, *malice*, *envy*, *pride*, or *oppoſition* to an author, whereby you may be eaſily tempted to put a *falſe and invidious ſenſe* upon his words. Lay aſide therefore a carping ſpirit, and read even an adverſary with attention and diligence, with an honeſt deſign to find out his true meaning; do not ſnatch at little lapſes and appearances of miſtake, in oppoſition to his declared and avowed meaning; nor impute any ſenſe or opinion to him which he denies to be his opinion, unleſs it be proved by the moſt plain and expreſs language.

Lastly, Remember that you *treat every author, writer, or ſpeaker, juſt as you yourſelves would be willing to be treated by others*, who are ſearching out the meaning of what you write or ſpeak: and maintain upon your ſpirit an awful ſenſe of the preſence of God, who is the judge of hearts, and will puniſh thoſe who by a baſe and diſhoneſt turn of mind wifully pervert the meaning of the ſacred writers, or even of common authors, under the influence of culpable prejudices. See more, *Logic*, Part I. Chap. 6. §. 3. *Directions concerning the Definition of Names.*

CHAP. IX.

Rules of IMPROVEMENT *by* CONVERSATION.

I.

IF we would improve our minds by *converſation*, it is a great happineſs *to be acquainted with perſons wiſer than ourſelves*. It is a piece of uſeful advice therefore, to get the favour of their converſation frequently, as far as circumſtances will allow: and if they happen to be a little reſerved, uſe all obliging methods to draw out of them what may increaſe your own knowledge.

II. WHATSOEVER company you are in, *waſte not the time in trifle and impertinence*. If you ſpend ſome hours amongſt children, talk with them according to their capacity; mark the young buddings of infant reaſon; obſerve the different motions and diſtinct workings of the animal and the mind, as far as you can diſcern them; take notice by what degrees the little creature grows up to the uſe of his reaſoning powers, and what early prejudices beſet and endanger his underſtanding. By this means you will learn how to addreſs yourſelf to children for their benefit, and perhaps you may derive ſome uſeful philoſophemes or theorems for your own entertainment.

III. IF you happen to be in company with a *merchant* or a *ſailor*, a *farmer* or a *mechanic*, a *milk-maid* or a *ſpinſter*, *lead them into a diſcourſe of the matters of their own peculiar province or profeſſion*; for every one knows, or ſhould know, his own buſineſs beſt. In this ſenſe a common mechanic is wiſer than a philoſopher. By this means you may gain ſome improvement in knowledge from every one you meet.

IV. *CONFINE not yourſelf always to one ſort of company*, or to perſons of the ſame party or opinion, either in matters of learning, religion, or the civil life, leſt if you ſhould happen to be nurſed up or educated in early miſtake, you ſhould be confirmed and eſta-

bliſhed in the ſame miſtake, by converſing only with perſons of the ſame ſentiments. A free and general converſation with men of very various countries, and of different parties, opinions, and practices (ſo far as it may be done ſafely) is of excellent uſe to undeceive us in many wrong judgments which we may have framed, and to lead us into juſter thoughts. It is ſaid, when the King of *Siam*, near *China*, firſt converſed with ſome *European* merchants, who ſought the favour of trading on his coaſt, he inquired of them ſome of the common appearances of ſummer and winter in their country; and when they told him of water growing ſo hard in their rivers, that men, and horſes, and laden carriages paſſed over it, and that rain ſometimes fell down as white and light as feathers, and ſometimes almoſt as hard as ſtones, he would not believe a ſyllable they ſaid; for *ice*, *ſnow*, and *hail*, were names and things utterly unknown to him, and to his ſubjects in that hot climate: he renounced all traffic with ſuch ſhameful liars, and would not ſuffer them to trade with his people. See here the natural effects of groſs ignorance.

Converſation with foreigners on various occaſions, has a happy influence to enlarge our minds, and to ſet them free from many errors and groſs prejudices we are ready to imbibe concerning them. *Domicillus* has never travelled five miles from his mother's chimney, and he imagines all outlandiſh men are *Papiſts*, and worſhip nothing but a croſs. *Tityrus*, the ſhepherd, was bred up all his life in the country, and never ſaw *Rome*; he fancied it to be only a huge village, and was therefore infinitely ſurpriſed to find ſuch palaces, ſuch ſtreets, ſuch glittering treaſures and gay magnificence, as his firſt journey to the city ſhewed him, and with wonder he confeſſes his folly and miſtake.

So *Virgil* introduces a poor ſhepherd,

Urbem quam dicunt Romam, Melibœe, putavi
Stultus ego huic noſtræ ſimilem, quo ſæpe ſolemus
Paſtores ovium teneros depellere fœtus, &c.

Thus Engliſhed:

Fool that I was, I thought imperial Rome
Like market-towns, where once a-week we come,
And thither drive our tender lambs from home.

Converſation would have given *Tityrus* a better notion of *Rome*, though he had never happened to travel thither.

V. *IN mixed company, among acquaintance and ſtrangers, endeavour to learn ſomething from all. Be ſwift to hear*, but *be cautious of your tongue*, leſt you betray your ignorance, and perhaps offend ſome of thoſe who are preſent too. The ſcripture ſeverely cenſures thoſe who *ſpeak evil of the things they know not.* Acquaint yourſelf therefore ſometimes with perſons and parties which are far diſtant from your common life and cuſtoms: this a way whereby you may form a wiſer opinion of men and things. *Prove all things, and hold faſt that which is good*, is a divine rule, and it comes from the Father of light and truth. But young perſons ſhould practiſe it indeed with due limitation, and under the eye of their elders.

VI. *BE not frighted nor provoked at opinions different from your own.* Some perſons are ſo confident they are in the right, that they will not come within the hearing of any notions but their own: they canton out to themſelves a little province in the intellectual world, where they fancy the light ſhines, and all the reſt is darkneſs. They never venture into the ocean of knowledge, nor ſurvey the riches of other minds, which are as ſolid and as uſeful, and perhaps are finer gold than what they ever poſſeſſed. Let not men imagine there is no certain truth but in the ſciences which they ſtudy, and amongſt that party in which they were born and educated.

VII. *BELIEVE that it is poſſible to learn ſomething from perſons much below yourſelf.* We are all ſhort-ſighted creatures; our views are alſo narrow and limited; we often ſee but one ſide of a matter, and do

not extend our ſight far and wide enough to reach every thing that has a connexion with the thing we talk of: *we ſee but in part, and know but in part*, therefore it is no wonder we form not right concluſions, becauſe we do not ſurvey the whole of any ſubject or argument. Even the proudeſt admirer of his own parts might find it uſeful to conſult with others, though of inferior capacity and penetration. We have a different proſpect of the ſame thing (if I may ſo ſpeak) according to the different poſition of our underſtandings toward it; a weaker man may ſometimes light on notions which have eſcaped a wiſer, and which the wiſer man might make a happy uſe of, if he would condeſcend to take notice of them.

VIII. It is of conſiderable advantage when we are purſuing any difficult point of knowledge, *to have a ſociety of ingenious correſpondents at hand, to whom we may propoſe it:* for every man has ſomething of a different genius and a various turn of mind, whereby the ſubject propoſed will be ſhown in all its lights, it will be repreſented in all its forms, and every ſide of it be turned to view, that a juſter judgment may be framed.

IX. To make converſation more valuable and uſeful, whether it be in a deſigned or accidental viſit, among perſons of the ſame or of different ſexes, after the neceſſary ſalutations are finiſhed, and the ſtream of common talk begins to heſitate, or runs flat and low, let ſome one perſon take a book which may be agreeable to the whole company, and by common conſent let him read in it ten lines, or a paragraph or two, or a few pages, till ſome word or ſentence gives an occaſion for any of the company to offer a thought or two relating to that ſubject. Interruption of the reader ſhould be no blame, for converſation is the buſineſs; whether it be to confirm what the author ſays, or to improve it, to enlarge upon or to correct it, to object againſt it, or to aſk any queſtion that is a-kin to it; and let every one that pleaſe add their opinion, and promote the converſation. When the diſcourſe ſinks

again, or diverts to trifles, let him that reads purſue the page, and read on further paragraphs or pages, till ſome occaſion is given by a word or ſentence for a new diſcourſe to be ſtarted, and that with the utmoſt eaſe and freedom. Such a method as this would prevent the hours of a viſit from running all to waſte; and by this means even among ſcholars, they will ſeldom find occaſion for that too juſt and bitter reflection, *I have loſt my time in the company of the learned.*

By ſuch practice as this, young ladies may very honourably and agreeably improve their hours, while one applies herſelf to reading, the others employ their attention, even among the various artifices of the needle: but let all of them make their occaſional remarks or inquiries. This will guard a great deal of that precious time from modiſh trifling impertinence or ſcandal, which might otherwiſe afford matter for painful repentance.

Obſerve this *rule in general*, whenſoever it lies in your power to lead the converſation, *let it be directed to ſome profitable point of knowledge or practice*, ſo far as may be done with decency; and let not the diſcourſe and the hours be ſuffered to run looſe without aim or deſign: and when a ſubject is ſtarted, paſs not haſtily to another, before you have brought the preſent theme of diſcourſe to ſome tolerable iſſue, or a joint conſent to drop it.

X. *ATTEND with ſincere diligence while any one of the company is declaring his ſenſe of the queſtion propoſed*; hear the argument with patience, though it differ ever ſo much from your ſentiments, for you yourſelf are very deſirous to be heard with patience by others who differ from you. Let not your thoughts be active and buſy all the while to find out ſomething to contradict, and by what means to oppoſe the ſpeaker, eſpecially in matters which are not brought to an iſſue. This is a frequent and unhappy temper and practice. You ſhould rather be intent and ſolicitous to take up the mind and meaning of the ſpeaker, zealous to ſeize and approve all that is true in his diſcourſe; nor yet ſhould

you want courage to oppoſe where it is neceſſary; but let your modeſty and patience, and a friendly temper, be as conſpicuous as your zeal.

XI. *WHEN a man ſpeaks with much freedom and eaſe, and gives his opinion in the plaineſt language of common ſenſe, do not preſently imagine you ſhall gain nothing by his company.* Sometimes you will find a perſon who in his converſation or his writings delivers his thoughts in ſo plain, ſo eaſy, ſo familiar and perſpicuous a manner, that you both underſtand and aſſent to every thing he ſaith, as faſt as you read or hear it: hereupon ſome hearers have been ready to conclude in haſte, ſurely *this man ſaith none but common things, I knew as much before, or I could have ſaid all this myſelf.* This is a frequent miſtake. *Pellucido* was a very great genius; when he ſpoke in the ſenate he was wont to convey his ideas in ſo ſimple and happy a manner, as to inſtruct and convince every hearer, and to inforce the conviction through the whole illuſtrious aſſembly; and that with ſo much evidence, that you would have been ready to wonder, that every one who ſpoke had not ſaid the ſame things: but *Pellucido* was the only man that could do it, the only ſpeaker who had attained this art and honour. Such is the writer of whom *Horace* would ſay,

——— *Ut ſibi quivis,*
Speret idem, ſudet multum, fruſtraque laboret
Auſus idem. De Art. Poet.

Smooth be your ſtyle, and plain and natural,
To ſtrike the ſons of Wapping *or* Whitehall.
While others think this eaſy to attain,
Let them but try, and with their utmoſt pain,
They'll ſweat and ſtrive to imitate in vain.

XII. If any thing ſeem dark in the diſcourſe of your companion, ſo that you have not a clear idea of what is ſpoken, *endeavour to obtain a clearer conception of it by a decent manner of inquiry.* Do not charge the

ſpeaker with obſcurity, either in his ſenſe or his words, but intreat his favour to relieve your own want of penetration, or to add an enlightening word or two, that you may take up his whole meaning.

If difficulties ariſe in your mind, and conſtrain your aſſent to the things ſpoken, *repreſent what objections ſome perſons would be ready to make againſt the ſentiments of the ſpeaker*, without telling him you oppoſe. This manner of addreſs carries ſomething more modeſt and obliging in it, than to appear to raiſe objections of your own by way of contradiction to him that ſpoke.

XIII. When you are forced to differ from him who delivers his ſenſe on any point, yet *agree as far as you can*, and *repreſent how far you agree*; and if there be any room for it, explain the words of the ſpeaker in ſuch a ſenſe to which you can in general aſſent and ſo agree with him: or at leaſt by a ſmall addition or alteration of his ſentiments ſhew your own ſenſe of things. It is the practice and delight of a candid hearer, to make it appear how unwilling he is to differ from him that ſpeaks. Let the ſpeaker know that it is nothing but truth conſtrains you to oppoſe him, and let that difference be always expreſt in few and civil and choſen words, ſuch as give the leaſt offence.

And be careful always to take *Solomon*'s rule with you, and let your correſpondent fairly finiſh his ſpeech before you reply; for *he that anſwereth a matter before he heareth it*, it is *folly and ſhame unto him*, Prov. xviii. 13.

A little watchfulneſs, care, and practice in younger life, will render all theſe things more eaſy, familiar, and natural to you, and will grow into habit.

XIV. As you ſhould carry about with you a conſtant and ſincere ſenſe of your own ignorance, ſo *you ſhould not be afraid nor aſhamed to confeſs this ignorance*, by taking all proper opportunities to *aſk* and *inquire* for farther information; whether it be the meaning of a word, the nature of a thing, the reaſon of a propoſition, the cuſtom of a nation, *&c.* never remain in ignorance for want of aſking.

Many a perſon had arrived at ſome conſiderable degree of knowledge, if he had not been full of ſelf-conceit, and imagined that he had known enough already, or elſe was aſhamed to let others know that he was unacquainted with it. God and man are ready to teach the meek, the humble, and the ignorant; but he that fancies himſelf to know any particular ſubject well, or that will not venture to aſk a queſtion about it, ſuch a one will not put himſelf into the way of improvement by inquiry and diligence. A *fool* may be *wiſer in his own conceit than ten men who can render a reaſon*, and ſuch a one is very likely to be an everlaſting fool; and perhaps alſo it is a ſilly ſhame renders his folly incurable.

Stultorum incurata pudor malus ulcera celat.
Hor. Epiſt. 16. Lib. I.

In *Engliſh* thus:

If fools have ulcers, and their pride conceal 'em;
They muſt have ulcers ſtill, for none can heal 'em.

XV. *BE not too forward*, eſpecially in the younger part of life, *to determine any queſtion in company with an infallible and peremptory ſentence*, nor ſpeak with aſſuming airs, and with a deciſive tone of voice. A young man in the preſence of his elders ſhould rather hear and attend, and weigh the arguments which are brought for the proof or refutation of any doubtful propoſition: and when it is your turn to ſpeak, propoſe your thoughts rather in way of inquiry. By this means your mind will be kept in a fitter temper to receive truth, and you will be more ready to correct and improve your own ſentiments, where you have not been too poſitive in affirming them. But if you have magiſterially decided the point, you will find a ſecret unwillingneſs to retract, though you ſhould feel an inward conviction that you were in the wrong.

XVI. It is granted indeed, that a ſeaſon may happen, when ſome bold pretender to ſcience may aſſume

haughty and positive airs to assert and vindicate a gross and dangerous error, or to renounce and vilify some very important truth: and if he has a popular talent of talking, and there be no remonstrance made against him, the company may be tempted too easily to give their assent to the impudence and infallibility of the presumer. They may imagine a proposition so much vilified can never be true, and that a doctrine which is so boldly censured and renounced can never be defended. Weak minds are too ready to persuade themselves, that a man would never talk with so much assurance unless he were certainly in the right, and could well maintain and prove what he said. By this means truth itself is in danger of being betrayed or lost, if there be no opposition made to such a pretending talker.

Now in such a case even a wise and a modest man may assume airs too, and repel insolence with its own weapons. There is a time, as *Solomon* the wisest of men teaches us, when *a fool should be answered according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit*, and lest others too easily yield up their faith and reason to his imperious dictates. Courage and positivity are never more necessary than on such an occasion. But it is good to join some argument with them of real and convincing force, and let it be strongly pronounced too.

When such a resistance is made, you shall find some of these bold talkers will draw in their horns, when their fierce and feeble pushes against truth and reason are repelled with pushing and confidence. It is pity indeed that truth should ever need such sort of defences; but we know that a triumphant assurance hath sometimes supported gross falsehoods, and a whole company have been captivated to error by this means, till some man with equal assurance has rescued them. It is pity that any momentous point of doctrine should happen to fall under such reproaches, and require such a mode of vindication: though if I happen to hear it, I ought not to turn my back, and to sneak off in silence, and leave the truth to lie baffled, bleeding, and slain.

Yet I muſt confeſs, I ſhould be glad to have no occaſion ever given me to fight with any man at this ſort of weapons, even though I ſhould be ſo happy as to ſilence his inſolence, and obtain an evident victory.

XVII. *BE not fond of diſputing every thing* pro *and* con, nor indulge yourſelf to ſhew your talent of attacking and defending. A *logic* which teaches nothing elſe, is little worth. This temper and practice will lead you juſt ſo far out of the way of knowledge, and divert your honeſt inquiry after the truth which is debated or ſought. In ſet diſputes, every little ſtraw is often laid hold on to ſupport our own cauſe; every thing that can be drawn in any way to give colour to our argument is advanced, and that perhaps with vanity and oſtentation. This puts the mind out of a proper poſture to ſeek and receive the truth.

XVIII. *DO not bring a warm party-ſpirit into a free converſation*, which is deſigned for mutual improvement in the ſearch of truth. Take heed of allowing yourſelf in thoſe ſelf-ſatisfied aſſurances, which keep the doors of the underſtanding barred faſt againſt the admiſſion of any new ſentiments. Let your ſoul be ever ready to hearken to further diſcoveries, from a conſtant and ruling conſciouſneſs of our preſent fallible and imperfect ſtate; and make it appear to your friends, that it is no hard taſk for you to learn and pronounce thoſe little words, *I was miſtaken*, how hard ſoever it be for the bulk of mankind to pronounce them.

XIX. As you may ſometimes raiſe inquiries for your own inſtruction and improvement, and draw out the learning, wiſdom, and fine ſentiments of your friends, who perhaps may be too reſerved or modeſt; ſo at other times if you perceive a perſon unſkilful in the matter of debate, *you may by queſtions* aptly propoſed in the *Socratic* method, *lead him into a clearer knowledge of the ſubject:* then you become his inſtructor in ſuch a manner as may not appear to make yourſelf his ſuperior.

XX. *TAKE heed of affecting always to ſhine in company above the reſt*, and to diſplay the riches of your

own underſtanding or your oratory, as though you would render yourſelf admirable to all that are preſent. This is ſeldom well taken in polite company; much leſs ſhould you uſe ſuch forms of ſpeech as ſhould inſinuate the ignorance or dulneſs of thoſe with whom you converſe.

XXI. THOUGH you ſhould not affect to flouriſh in a copious harangue and diffuſive ſtyle in company, yet *neither ſhould you rudely interrupt and reproach him that happens to uſe it*; but when he has done ſpeaking, reduce his ſentiments into a more contracted form; not with a ſhew of correcting, but as one who is doubtful whether you hit upon his true ſenſe or no. Thus matters may be brought more eaſily from a wild confuſion into a ſingle point, queſtions may be ſooner determined, and difficulties more readily removed.

XXII. *BE not ſo ready to charge ignorance, prejudice, and miſtake upon others*, as you are to ſuſpect yourſelf of it: and in order to ſhow how free you are from prejudices, learn to bear contradiction with patience: let it be eaſy to you to hear your own opinion ſtrongly oppoſed, eſpecially in matters which are doubtful and diſputable amongſt men of ſobriety and virtue. Give a patient hearing to arguments on all ſides, otherwiſe you give the company occaſion to ſuſpect that it is not the evidence of truth has led you into this opinion, but ſome lazy anticipation of judgment; ſome beloved preſumption, ſome long and raſh poſſeſſion of a party-ſcheme, in which you deſire to reſt undiſturbed. If your aſſent has been eſtabliſhed upon juſt and ſufficient grounds, why ſhould you be afraid to let the truth be put to the trial of argument?

XXIII. *BANISH utterly out of all converſation, and eſpecially out of all learned and intellectual conference, every thing that tends to provoke paſſion, or raiſe a fire in the blood.* Let no ſharp language, no noiſy exclamation, no ſarcaſms or biting jeſts be heard among you; no perverſe or invidious conſequences be drawn from each other's opinions, and imputed to the perſon: let there be no wilful perverſion of another's meaning; no

ſudden ſeizure of a lapſed ſyllable to play upon it, nor any abuſed conſtruction of an innocent miſtake: ſuffer not your tongue to inſult a modeſt opponent that begins to yield; let there be no crowing and triumph, even where there is evident victory on your ſide. All theſe things are enemies to friendſhip, and the ruin of free converſation. The impartial ſearch of truth requires all calmneſs and ſerenity, all temper and candour; mutual inſtruction can never be attained in the midſt of paſſion, pride, and clamour, unleſs we ſuppoſe in the midſt of ſuch a ſcene there is a loud and penetrating lecture read by both ſides on the folly and ſhameful infirmities of human nature.

XXIV. WHENSOEVER therefore any unhappy word ſhall ariſe in company that might give you a reaſonable diſguſt, *quaſh the riſing reſentment, be it ever ſo juſt*, and command your ſoul and your tongue into ſilence, leſt you cancel the hopes of all improvement for that hour, and transform the learned converſation into the mean and vulgar form of reproaches and railing. The man who begun to break the peace in ſuch a ſociety, will fall under the ſhame and conviction of ſuch a ſilent reproof, if he has any thing ingenuous about him. If this ſhould not be ſufficient, let a grave admonition, or a ſoft and gentle turn of wit, with an air of pleaſantry, give the warm diſputer an occaſion to ſtop the progreſs of his indecent fire, if not to retract the indecency and quench the flame,

XXV. *INURE yourſelf to a candid and obliging manner in all your converſation, and acquire the art of pleaſing addreſs, even when you teach as well as when you learn*, and when you oppoſe as well as when you aſſert or prove. This degree of politeneſs is not to be attained without a diligent attention to ſuch kind of directions as are here laid down, and a frequent exerciſe and practice of them.

XXVI. IF you would know *what ſort of companions you ſhould ſelect for the cultivation and advantage of the mind*, the *general rule is*, chooſe ſuch as by their brightneſs of parts, and their diligence in ſtudy, or by their

ſuperior advancement in learning, or peculiar excellency in any art, ſcience, or accompliſhment, divine or human, may be capable of adminiſtering to your improvement; and be ſure to maintain and keep ſome due regard to their moral character always, leſt while you wander in queſt of intellectual gain, you fall into the contagion of irreligion and vice. No wiſe man would venture into a houſe infected with the plague, in order to ſee the fineſt collections of any *virtuoſo* in *Europe*.

XXVII. Nor is it every ſober perſon of your acquaintance, no, nor every man of bright parts, or rich in learning, that is fit to engage in free converſation for the inquiry after truth. Let a perſon have ever ſo illuſtrious talents, yet *he is not a proper aſſociate for ſuch a purpoſe, if he lie under any of the following infirmities.*

(1.) If he be exceedingly reſerved, and hath either no inclination to diſcourſe, or no tolerable capacity of ſpeech and language for the communication of his ſentiments.

(2.) If he be haughty and proud of his knowledge, imperious in his airs, and is always fond of impoſing his ſentiments on all the company.

(3.) If he be poſitive and dogmatical in his own opinions, and will diſpute to the end; if he will reſiſt the brighteſt evidence of truth rather than ſuffer himſelf to be overcome, or yield to the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt reaſonings.

(4.) If he be one who always affects to outſhine all the company, and delights to hear himſelf talk and flouriſh upon a ſubject, and make long harangues, while the reſt muſt be all ſilent and attentive.

(5.) If he be a perſon of a whiffling and unſteady turn of mind, who cannot keep cloſe to a point of controverſy, but wanders from it perpetually, and is always ſolicitous to ſay ſomething, whether it be pertinent to the queſtion or no.

(6.) If he be fretful and peeviſh, and given to reſentment upon all occaſions; if he knows not how to bear contradiction, or is ready to take things in a wrong ſenſe; if he is ſwift to feel a ſuppoſed offence,

or to imagine himſelf affronted, and then break out into a ſudden paſſion, or retain ſilent and ſullen wrath.

(7.) If he affect wit on all occaſions, and is full of his conceits and puns, quirks or quibbles, jeſts and repartees; theſe may agreeably entertain and animate an *hour of mirth*, but they have no place in the *ſearch after truth*.

(8.) If he carry always about him a ſort of craft, and cunning, and diſguiſe, and act rather like a ſpy than a friend. Have a care of ſuch a one as will make an ill uſe of freedom in converſation, and immediately charge hereſy upon you, when you happen to differ from thoſe ſentiments which authority or cuſtom has eſtabliſhed.

In ſhort, you ſhould avoid the man in ſuch ſelect converſation, who practiſes any thing that is unbecoming the character of a ſincere, free, and open ſearcher after truth.

Now though you may pay all the relative duties of life to perſons of theſe unhappy qualifications, and treat them with decency and love, ſo far as religion and humanity oblige you, yet take care of entering into a free debate on matters of truth or falſehood in their company, and eſpecially about the principles of religion. I confeſs, if a perſon of ſuch a temper happens to judge and talk well on ſuch a ſubject, you may hear him with attention, and derive what profit you can from his diſcourſe; but he is by no means to be choſen for a free conference in matters of inquiry and knowledge.

XXVIII. While I would perſuade you to beware of ſuch perſons, and abſtain from too much freedom of diſcourſe amongſt them, it is very natural to infer that *you ſhould watch againſt the working of theſe evil qualities in your own breaſt*, if you happen to be tainted with any of them yourſelf. Men of learning and ingenuity will juſtly avoid your acquaintance, when they find ſuch an unhappy and unſociable temper prevailing in you.

XXIX. To conclude: when you retire from company, then *converſe with yourſelf in ſolitude, and enquire what you have learnt for the improvement of your underſtanding, or for the rectifying your inclinations*, for the increaſe of your virtues, or the meliorating your conduct and behaviour in any future parts of life. If you have ſeen ſome of your company candid, modeſt, humble in their manner, wiſe and ſagacious, juſt and pious in their ſentiments, polite and graceful, as well as clear and ſtrong in their expreſſion, and univerſally acceptable and lovely in their behaviour, endeavour to impreſs the idea of all theſe upon your memory, and treaſure them up for your imitation.

XXX. If the laws of reaſon, decency, and civility have not been well obſerved amongſt your aſſociates, *take notice of thoſe defects for your own improvement:* and from every occurrence of this kind, remark ſomething to imitate or to avoid, in elegant, polite, and uſeful converſation. Perhaps you will find that ſome perſons preſent have really diſpleaſed the company, by an exceſſive and too viſible an affectation to pleaſe, *i. e.* by giving looſe to ſervile flattery, or promiſcuous praiſe; while others were as ready to oppoſe and contradict every thing that was ſaid. Some have deſerved juſt cenſure for a moroſe and affected taciturnity, and others have been anxious and careful leſt their ſilence ſhould be interpreted a want of ſenſe, and therefore they have ventured to make ſpeeches, though they had nothing to ſay which was worth hearing. Perhaps you will obſerve, that one was ingenious in his thoughts and bright in his language, but he was ſo top-full of himſelf, that he let it ſpill on all the company; that he ſpoke well indeed, but that he ſpoke too long, and did not allow equal liberty or time to his aſſociates. You will remark, that another was full charged to let out his words before his friend had done ſpeaking, or impatient of the leaſt oppoſition to any thing he ſaid. You will remember that ſome perſons have talked at large and with great confidence, of things which they underſtood not, and others counted every thing tedious

and intolerable that was ſpoken upon ſubjects out of their ſphere, and they would fain confine the conference entirely within the limits of their own narrow knowledge and ſtudy. The errors of converſation are almoſt infinite.

XXXI. By a review of ſuch irregularities as theſe, you may learn to avoid thoſe follies and pieces of ill conduct which ſpoil good converſation, or make it leſs agreeable and leſs uſeful; and by degrees you will acquire that delightful and eaſy manner of addreſs and behaviour in all uſeful correſpondences, which may render your company every where deſired and beloved; and at the ſame time among the beſt of your companions you may make the higheſt improvement in your own intellectual acquiſitions, that the diſcourſe of mortal creatures will allow, under all our diſadvantages in this ſorry ſtate of mortality. But there is a day coming, when we ſhall be ſeized away from this lower claſs in the ſchool of knowledge, where we labour under the many dangers and darkneſſes, the errors and the incumbrances of fleſh and blood, and our converſation ſhall be with angels, and more illuminated ſpirits in the upper regions of the univerſe.

CHAP. X.

Of Disputes.

I.

UNDER the general head of *converſation for the improvement of the mind*, we may rank the practice of *diſputing*; that is, when two or more perſons appear to maintain different ſentiments, and defend their own, or oppoſe the other's opinion, in alternate diſcourſe, by ſome methods of argument.

II. As theſe *diſputes* often ariſe in good earneſt, where the two contenders do really believe the different propoſitions which they ſupport; ſo ſometimes they are appointed as mere trials of ſkill in *academies*,

or ſchools, by the ſtudents: ſometimes they are practiſed, and that with apparent fervour in courts of *judicature* by lawyers, in order to gain the fees of their different clients, while both ſides perhaps are really of the ſame ſentiment with regard to the cauſe which is tried.

III. In common converſation, *diſputes* are often managed without any forms of regularity or order, and they turn to good or evil purpoſes, chiefly according to the temper of the diſputants. They may ſometimes be ſucceſsful to ſearch out truth, ſometimes effectual to maintain truth, and convince the miſtaken, but at other times a diſpute is a mere ſcene of battle in order to victory and vain triumph.

IV. There are ſome few *general rules* which ſhould be obſerved in all debates whatſoever, if we would find out truth by them, or convince a friend of his error, even though they be not managed according to any ſettled forms of diſputation: and as there are almoſt as many opinions and judgments of things as there are perſons, ſo when ſeveral perſons happen to meet and confer together upon any ſubject, they are ready to declare their different ſentiments, and ſupport them by ſuch reaſonings as they are capable of. This is called *debating*, or *diſputing*, as is above deſcribed.

V. When perſons begin a debate, *they ſhould always take care that they are agreed in ſome general principles or propoſitions*, which either more nearly or remotely affect the queſtion in hand; for otherwiſe they have no foundation or hope of convincing each other; they muſt have ſome common ground to ſtand upon while they maintain the conteſt.

When they find they agree in ſome remote propoſitions, then let them ſearch farther, and enquire how near they approach to each other's ſentiments; and whatſoever propoſitions they agree in, let theſe lay a foundation for the mutual hope of conviction. Hereby you will be prevented from running at every turn to ſome original and remote propoſitions and axioms,

which practice both entangles and prolongs a diſpute. As for inſtance, if there was a debate propoſed betwixt a *Proteſtant* and a *Papiſt*, whether there be ſuch a place as *Purgatory*? Let them remember that they both agree in this point, that *Chriſt has made ſatisfaction or atonement for ſin*, and upon this ground let them both ſtand, while they ſearch out the controverted doctrine of *Purgatory* by way of conference or debate.

VI. The *queſtion ſhould be cleared from all doubtful terms and needleſs additions*; and all things that belong to the *queſtion* ſhould be expreſſed in plain and intelligible language. This is ſo neceſſary a thing, that without it, men will be expoſed to ſuch ſort of ridiculous conteſts as was found one day between the two unlearned combatants, *Sartor* and *Sutor*, who aſſaulted and defended the doctrine of *tranſubſtantiation* with much zeal and violence: but *Latino* happening to come into their company, and enquiring the ſubject of their diſpute, aſked each of them what he meant by that long hard word *tranſubſtantiation*. *Sutor* readily informed him, that he underſtood *bowing at the name of Jeſus*: but *Sartor* aſſured him, that he meant nothing but *bowing at the high altar*: "No wonder then," ſaid *Latino*, "that you cannot agree, when you neither "underſtand one another, nor the word about which "you contend." I think the whole family of the *Sartors* and *Sutors* would be wiſer if they avoided ſuch kind of debates, till they underſtood the terms better. But alas! even their wives carry on ſuch conferences; the other day one was heard in the ſtreet explaining to her leſs learned neighbour the meaning of *metaphyſical* ſcience; and ſhe aſſured her, that as *phyſics* were medicines for the body, ſo *metaphyſics* was *phyſic* for the ſoul: upon this they went on to diſpute the point, how far the *divine* excelled the *doctor*.

Auditum admiſſi riſum teneatis amici?
Ridentem dicere verum quid vetat? Hor.

Can it be faulty to repeat
A dialogue that walk'd the ſtreet?
Or can my graveſt friends forbear
A laugh, when ſuch diſputes they hear?

VII. And not only the *ſenſe and meaning* of the words uſed in the *queſtion* ſhould be ſettled and adjuſted between the diſputants, but the *preciſe point of inquiry ſhould be diſtinctly fixed;* the queſtion in debate ſhould be limited preciſely to its ſpecial extent, or declared to be taken in its more general ſenſe. As for inſtance, if two men are contending *whether civil government be of divine right or no;* here it muſt be obſerved, the queſtion is not whether *monarchy* in one man, or a *republic* in multitudes of the people, or an *ariſtocracy* in a few of the chief, is appointed of God as neceſſary; but whether civil government in its moſt general ſenſe, or in any form whatſoever, is derived from the will and appointment of God? *Again*, the point of inquiry ſhould be limited further. Thus, the queſtion is not *whether government comes from the will of God* by the light of *revelation*, for that is granted; but *whether it is derived from the will of God* by the light of *reaſon too.* This ſort of ſpecification or limitation of the queſtion, hinders and prevents the diſputers from wandering away from the preciſe point of inquiry.

It is this trifling humour or diſhoneſt artifice of changing the queſtion, and wandering away from the firſt point of debate, which gives endleſs length to diſputes, and cauſes both the diſputants to part without any ſatisfaction. And one chief occaſion of it is this; when one of the combatants feels his cauſe run low and fail, and is juſt ready to be confuted and demoliſhed, he is tempted to ſtep aſide to avoid the blow, and betakes him to a different queſtion; thus, if his adverſary be not well aware of him, he begins to entrench himſelf in a new faſtneſs, and holds out the ſiege with a new artillery of thoughts and words. It is the pride of man which is the ſpring of this evil, and an

unwillingneſs to yield up their own opinions even to be overcome by truth itſelf.

VIII. KEEP this always therefore upon your mind as an everlaſting rule of conduct in your debates to find out truth, that a *reſolute deſign, or even a warm affectation of victory, is the bane of all real improvement, and an effectual bar againſt the admiſſion of the truth which you profeſs to ſeek.* This works with a ſecret, but a powerful and miſchievous influence in every diſpute, unleſs we are much upon our guard. It appears in frequent converſation: every age, every ſex, and each party of mankind are ſo fond of being in the right, that they know not how to renounce this unhappy prejudice, this vain love of victory.

When truth with bright evidence is ready to break in upon a diſputant, and to overcome his objections and miſtakes, how ſwift and ready is the mind to engage wit and fancy, craft and ſubtilty, to cloud and perplex and puzzle the truth, if poſſible? How eager is he to throw in ſome impertinent queſtion to divert from the main ſubject? How ſwift to take hold of ſome occaſional word, thereby to lead the diſcourſe off from the point in hand? So much afraid is human nature of parting with its errors, and being overcome by truth. Juſt thus a hunted *hare* calls up all the ſhifts that nature hath taught her, ſhe treads back her mazes, croſſes and confounds her former track, and uſes all poſſible methods to divert the ſcent, when ſhe is in danger of being ſeized and taken. Let *puſs* practiſe what nature teaches; but would one imagine, that any rational being ſhould take ſuch pains to avoid truth, and to eſcape the improvement of its underſtanding?

IX. WHEN you come to a diſpute in order to find out truth, *do not preſume that you are certainly poſſeſſed of it beforehand.* Enter the debate with a ſincere deſign of yielding to reaſon, on which ſide ſoever it appears. Uſe no ſubtile arts to cloud and entangle the queſtion; hide not yourſelf in doubtful words and phraſes; do not affect little ſhifts and ſubterfuges to avoid the force of an argument; take a generous pleaſure to eſpy the

firſt riſing beams of truth, though it be on the ſide of your opponent: endeavour to remove the little obſcurities that hang about it, and ſuffer and encourage it to break out into open and convincing light; that while your opponent perhaps may gain the better of your reaſonings, yet you yourſelf may triumph over error, and I am ſure that is a much more valuable acquiſition and victory.

X. *WATCH narrowly in every diſpute, that your opponent does not lead you unwarily to grant ſome principle or propoſition, which will bring with it a fatal conſequence,* and lead you inſenſibly into his ſentiment, though it be far aſtray from the truth: and by this wrong ſtep you will be, as it were, plunged into dangerous errors before you are aware. *Polonides* in free converſation led *Incauta* to agree with him in this plain propoſition, that the *bleſſed God has too much juſtice in any caſe to puniſh* * *any being who is in itſelf innocent;* till he not only allowed it with an unthinking alacrity, but aſſerted it in moſt univerſal and unguarded terms. A little after *Polonides* came in diſcourſe to commend the virtues, the innocence, and the piety of our bleſſed Saviour; and thence inferred, *it was impoſſible that God ſhould ever puniſh ſo holy a perſon, who was never guilty of any crime:* then *Incauta* eſpied the ſnare, and found himſelf robbed and defrauded of the great doctrine of the atonement by the death of *Chriſt,* upon which he had placed his immortal hopes according to the goſpel. This taught him to bethink himſelf what a dangerous conceſſion he had made in ſo univerſal a manner, that *God would never puniſh any being who was innocent,* and he ſaw it needful to recall his words, or to explain them better, by adding this reſtriction or limitation, viz. *Unleſs this innocent being were ſome way involved in another's ſin, or ſtood as a voluntary ſurety for the guilty:* by this limitation he ſecured the great and bleſſed doctrine of the ſacrifice of *Chriſt* for the ſins of men, and learnt

* The word *puniſh* here ſignifies, *to bring ſome natural evil upon a perſon on account of moral evil done.*

to be more cautious in his conceſſions for time to come.

Two months ago *Fatalio* had almoſt tempted his friend *Fidens* to leave off prayer, and to abandon his dependence on the providence of God in the common affairs of life, by obtaining of him a conceſſion of the like kind. Is it not evident to reaſon, ſays *Fatalio*, that God's immenſe ſcheme of tranſactions in the univerſe was contrived and determined long before you and I were born? Can you imagine, my dear *Fidens*, that the bleſſed God changes his original contrivances, and makes new interruptions in the courſe of them ſo often as you and I want his aid, to prevent the little accidents of life, or to guard us from them? Can you ſuffer yourſelf to be perſuaded, that the great Creator of this world takes care to ſupport a bridge which was quite rotten, and to make it ſtand firm a few minutes longer till you had rode over it? Or will he uphold a falling tower while we two were paſſing by it, that ſuch worms as you and I are might eſcape the ruin?

But you ſay, *you prayed for his protection in the morning, and he certainly hears prayer.* I grant he knows it; but are you ſo fond and weak, ſaid he, as to ſuppoſe that the univerſal Lord of all had ſuch a regard to a word or two of your breath, as to make alterations in his own eternal ſcheme upon that account? Nor is there any other way whereby his providence can preſerve you in anſwer to prayer, but by creating ſuch perpetual interruptions and changes in his own conduct according to your daily behaviour.

I acknowledge, ſays *Fidens*, there is no other way to ſecure the doctrine of divine providence in all theſe common affairs; and therefore I begin to doubt, whether God does or ever will exert himſelf ſo particularly in our little concerns.

Have a care, good *Fidens*, that you yield not too far: take heed leſt you have granted too much to *Fatalio*. Pray let me aſk of you, Could not the great God, who graſps and ſurveys all future and diſtant things in one ſingle view, could not he from the be-

ginning foreſee your morning prayer for his protection, and appoint all ſecond cauſes to concur for the ſupport of that crazy *bridge*, or to make that old *tower* ſtand firm till you had eſcaped the danger? Or could not he cauſe all the mediums to work ſo as to make it fall before you come near it? Can he not appoint all his own tranſactions in the univerſe, and every event in the natural world, in a way of perfect correſpondence with his own fore-knowledge of all the events, actions, and appearances of the moral world in every part of it? Can he not direct every thing in nature, which is but his ſervant, to act in perfect agreement with his eternal preſcience of our ſins, or of our piety? And hereby all the glory of providence, and our neceſſary dependence upon it by faith and prayer, are as well ſecured, as if he interpoſed to alter his own ſcheme every moment.

Let me aſk again, Did not he in his own counſels or decrees appoint thunders and lightnings, and earthquakes, to burn up and deſtroy *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and turn them into a dead ſea, juſt at the time when the iniquities of thoſe cities were raiſed to their ſupreme height? Did he not ordain the fountains of the deep to be broken up, and overwhelming rains to fall down from heaven, juſt when a guilty world deſerved to be drowned; while he took care of the ſecurity of righteous *Noah*, by an ark which ſhould float upon that very deluge of waters? Thus he can puniſh the criminal when he pleaſes, and reward the devout worſhipper in the proper ſeaſon, by his original and eternal ſchemes of appointment, as well as if he interpoſed every moment anew. Take heed, *Fidens*, that you be not tempted away by ſuch ſophiſms of *Fatalio*, to with-hold prayer from God, and to renounce your faith in his providence.

Remember this ſhort and plain caution of the ſubtile errors of men. Let a ſnake but once thruſt in his head at ſome ſmall unguarded fold of your garment, and he will inſenſibly and unavoidably wind his whole body into your boſom, and give you a pernicious wound.

XI. On the other hand, *when you have found your opponent make any ſuch conceſſion as may turn to your real advantage in maintaining the truth, be wiſe and watchful to obſerve it, and make a happy improvement of it.* *Rhapſodus* has taken a great deal of pains to detract from the honour of Chriſtianity, by ſly inſinuations that the ſacred writers are perpetually promoting virtue and piety by promiſes and threatenings; whereas *neither the fear of future puniſhment, nor the hope of future reward, can poſſibly be called good affections, or ſuch as are the acknowledged ſprings and ſources of all actions truly good.* He adds further, that *this fear, or this hope, cannot conſiſt in reality with virtue or goodneſs, if it either ſtands as eſſential to any moral performance, or as a conſiderable motive to any good action:* and thus he would fain lead *Chriſtians* to be aſhamed of the goſpel of *Chriſt*, becauſe of its future and eternal promiſes and threatenings, as being inconſiſtent with his notion of virtue; for he ſuppoſes virtue ſhould be ſo beloved and practiſed for the ſake of its own beauty and lovelineſs, that all other motives ariſing from rewards or puniſhments, fear or hope, do really take away juſt ſo much from the very nature of virtue as their influence reaches to: and no part of thoſe good practices are really valuable, but what ariſes from the mere love of virtue itſelf, without any regard to puniſhment or reward.

But obſerve in two pages afterwards, he grants that *this principle of fear of future puniſhment, and hope of future reward, how mercenary and ſervile ſoever it may be accounted, is yet in many circumſtances a great advantage, ſecurity, and ſupport to virtue; eſpecially where there is danger of the violence of rage or luſt, or any counter-working paſſion to control and overcome the good affections of the mind.*

Now the rule and the practice of *Chriſtianity*, or the goſpel, as it is cloſely connected with future rewards and puniſhments, may be well ſupported by this conceſſion. Pray, *Rhapſodus*, tell me, if every man in this preſent life, by the violence of ſome counter-working paſſion, may not have his good affections to virtue controlled or overcome? May not therefore his

eternal fears and hopes be a great advantage, ſecurity, and ſupport to virtue in ſo dangerous a ſtate and ſituation, as our journey through this world towards a better? And this is all that the defence of Chriſtianity neceſſarily requires.

And yet further, let me aſk our *rhapſodiſt*, if you have nothing elſe, Sir, but the beauty, and excellency, and loveline ſs of virtue to preach and flouriſh upon, before ſuch ſorry and degenerate creatures as the bulk of mankind are, and you have no future rewards or puniſhments with which to addreſs their hopes and fears, how many of theſe vicious wretches will you ever reclaim from all their varieties of profaneneſs, intemperance, and madneſs? How many have you ever actually reclaimed by this ſmooth ſoft method, and theſe fine words? What has all that reaſoning and rhetoric done which have been diſplayed by your predeceſſors the *Heathen* moraliſts, upon this excellency and beauty of virtue? What has it been able to do towards the reforming of a ſinful world? Perhaps now and then a man of better natural mould has been a little refined, and perhaps alſo there may have been here and there a man reſtrained or recovered from injuſtice and knavery, from drunkenneſs and lewdneſs, and vile debaucheries, by this fair reaſoning and philoſophy: but have the paſſions of revenge and envy, of ambition and pride, and the inward ſecret vices of the mind been mortified merely by this philoſophical language? Have any of theſe men been made new creatures, men of real piety and love to God?

Go dreſs up all the virtues of human nature in all the beauties of your oratory, and declaim aloud on the praiſe of ſocial virtue, and the amiable qualities of goodneſs, till your heart or your lungs ache, among the looſer herds of mankind, and you will ever find, as your *Heathen* fathers have done before, that the wild paſſions and appetites of men are too violent to be reſtrained by ſuch mild and ſilken language. You may as well build up a fence of ſtraw and feathers to reſiſt a cannon-ball, or try to quench a flaming grenado with

a ſhell of fair water, as hope to ſucceed in theſe attempts. But an *eternal heaven* and an *eternal hell* carry divine force and power with them: this doctrine from the mouth of *Chriſtian* preachers has begun the reformation of multitudes: this goſpel has recovered thouſands among the nations from iniquity and death. They have been awakened by theſe awful ſcenes to begin religion, and afterwards their virtue has improved itſelf into ſuperior and more refined principles and habits by divine grace, and riſen to high and eminent degrees, though not to a conſummate ſtate. The bleſſed God knows human nature much better than *Rhapſodus* doth, and has throughout his word appointed a more proper and more effectual method of addreſs to it by the paſſions of hope and fear, by puniſhments and rewards.

If you read on four pages further in theſe writings, you will find the author makes another conceſſion. He allows that *the maſter of a family uſing proper rewards and gentle puniſhments towards his children, teaches them goodneſs, and by this help inſtructs them in a virtue which afterwards they practiſe upon other grounds, and without thinking of a penalty or a bribe: and this*, ſays he, *is what we call a liberal education, and a liberal ſervice.*

This new conceſſion of that author may alſo be very happily improved in favour of *Chriſtianity*. What are the beſt of men in this life? They are by no means perfect in virtue: we are all but children here under the great Maſter of the family, and he is pleaſed by hopes and fears, by mercies and corrections, to inſtruct us in virtue, and to conduct us onward towards the ſublimer and more perfect practice of it in the future world, where it ſhall be performed, in his own language, perhaps *without thinking of penalties and bribes.* And ſince he hath allowed that this conduct may be called *a liberal education*, and *a liberal ſervice*, let Chriſtianity then be indulged the title of a *liberal education* alſo, and it is admirably fitted for ſuch frail and ſinful creatures, while they are training up towards the ſublimer virtues of the heavenly ſtate.

XII. *WHEN you are engaged in a diſpute with a perſon of very different principles from yourſelf, and you cannot find any ready way to prevail with him to embrace the truth by principles which you both freely acknowledge, you may fairly make uſe of his own principles to ſhew him his miſtake, and thus convince or ſilence him from his own conceſſions.*

If your opponent ſhould be a *Stoic* philoſopher, or a *Jew*, you may purſue your argument in defence of ſome *Chriſtian* doctrine or duty againſt ſuch a diſputant, by axioms or laws borrowed either from *Zeno* or *Moſes*. And though you do not enter into the inquiry how many of the laws of *Moſes* are abrogated, or whether *Zeno* was right or wrong in his philoſophy, yet if from the principles and conceſſion of your opponent, you can ſupport your argument for the goſpel of *Chriſt*, this has been always counted a fair treatment of an adverſary, and it is called *argumentum ad hominem*, or *ratio ex conceſſis*. St. *Paul* ſometimes makes uſe of this ſort of diſputation, when he talks with *Jews* or *Heathen* philoſophers; and at leaſt he ſilences if not convinces them: which is ſometimes neceſſary to be done againſt an obſtinate and clamorous adverſary, that juſt honour might be paid to truths which he knew were divine, and that the only true doctrine of ſalvation might be confirmed and propagated among ſinful and dying men.

XIII. *YET great care muſt be taken leſt your debates break in upon your paſſions, and awaken them to take part in the controverſy.* When the opponent puſhes hard, and gives juſt and mortal wounds to our own opinion, our paſſions are very apt to feel the ſtrokes, and to riſe in reſentment and defence. *Self* is ſo mingled with the *ſentiments* which we have choſen, and has ſuch a tender feeling of all the oppoſition which is made to them, that *perſonal brawls* are very ready to come in as *ſeconds*, to ſucceed and finiſh the *diſpute of opinions*. Then noiſe and clamour and folly appear in all their ſhapes, and chaſe reaſon and truth out of ſight.

How unhappy is the caſe of frail and wretched mankind in this dark or duſky ſtate of ſtrong paſſion and

glimmering reaſon? How ready are we, when our paſſions are engaged in the diſpute, to conſider more what loads of nonſenſe and reproach we can lay upon our opponent, than what reaſon and truth require in the controverſy itſelf. Diſmal are the conſequences mankind are too often involved in by this evil principle; it is this common and dangerous practice that carries the heart aſide from all that is fair and honeſt in our ſearch after truth, or the propagation of it in the world. One would wiſh from one's very ſoul, that none of the *Chriſtian* fathers had been guilty of ſuch follies as theſe.

But St. *Jerome* fairly confeſſes this evil principle, in his apology for himſelf to *Pammachius*, *that he had not ſo much regarded what was exactly to be ſpoken in the controverſy he had in hand, as what was fit to lay a load on* Jovinian. And, indeed, I fear this was the vile cuſtom of many of the writers even in the church-affairs of thoſe times. But it will be a double ſcandal upon us in our more enlightened age, if we will allow ourſelves in a conduct ſo criminal and diſhoneſt. Happy ſouls, who keep ſuch a ſacred dominion over their inferior and animal powers, and all the influences of pride and ſecular intereſt, that the ſenſitive tumults, or theſe vicious influences, never riſe to diſturb the ſuperior and better operations of the reaſoning mind!

XIV. These *general directions* are neceſſary, or at leaſt uſeful in all debates whatſoever, whether they ariſe in occaſional converſation, or are appointed at any certain time or place; whether they are managed with or without any formal rules to govern them. But there are three ſorts of *diſputation* in which there are ſome forms and orders obſerved, and which are diſtinguiſhed by theſe three names, *viz. Socratic*, *Forenſic*, and *Academic*, *i. e.* the diſputes of the ſchools.

Concerning each of theſe it may not be improper to diſcourſe a little, and give a few *particular directions* or *remarks* about them.

CHAP. XI.

The Socratical Way of Diſputation.

I.

THIS method of diſpute derives its name from *Socrates*, by whom it was practiſed, and by other philoſophers in his age, long before *Ariſtotle* invented the particular forms of *ſyllogiſm* in *mood* and *figure*, which are now uſed in ſcholaſtic diſputations.

II. THE *Socratical* way is managed by *queſtions* and *anſwers* in ſuch a manner as this, *viz.* If I would lead a perſon into the belief of a heaven and a hell, or a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, I might begin in ſome ſuch manner of inquiry, and ſuppoſe the moſt obvious and eaſy anſwers.

Queſt. *Does not God govern the world?*

Anſ. Surely he that made it governs it.

Queſt. *Is not God both a good and a righteous governor?*

Anſ. Both theſe characters doubtleſs belong to him.

Queſt. *What is the true notion of a good and righteous governor?*

Anſ. That he puniſhes the wicked, and rewards the good.

Queſt. *Are the good always rewarded in this life?*

Anſ. No ſurely, for many virtuous men are miſerable here, and greatly afflicted.

Queſt. *Are the wicked always puniſhed in this life?*

Anſ. No certainly, for many of them live without ſorrow, and ſome of the vileſt of men are often raiſed to great riches and honour.

Queſt. *Wherein then doth God make it appear that he is good and righteous?*

Anſ. I own there is but little appearance of it on earth.

Queſt. *Will there not be a time then when the tables ſhall be turned, and the ſcene of things changed, ſince God governs mankind righteouſly?*

Anſ. Doubtleſs, there muſt be a proper time, wherein God will make that goodneſs and that righteouſneſs to appear.

Queſt. *If this be not before their death, how can it be done?*

Anſ. I can think of no other way but by ſuppoſing man to have ſome exiſtence after this life.

Queſt. *Are you not convinced then that there muſt be a ſtate of reward and puniſhment after death?*

Anſ. Yes ſurely, I now ſee plainly that the goodneſs and righteouſneſs of God, as governor of the world, neceſſarily require it.

III. Now the *advantages of this method are very conſiderable.*

1. It repreſents the *form of a dialogue or common converſation*, which is a much more eaſy, more pleaſant, and a more ſprightly way of inſtruction, and more fit to excite the attention and ſharpen the penetration of the learner, than ſolitary reading or ſilent attention to a lecture. Man being a ſociable creature, delights more in converſation, and learns better this way, if it could always be wiſely and happily practiſed.

2. This method *hath ſomething very obliging in it*, and carries a very humble and condeſcending air, when he that inſtructs ſeems to be the inquirer, and ſeeks information from him who learns.

3. *It leads the learner into the knowledge of truth as it were by his own invention*, which is a very pleaſing thing to human nature; and by queſtions pertinently and artificially propoſed, it does as effectually draw him on to diſcover his own miſtakes, which he is much more eaſily perſuaded to relinquiſh when he ſeems to have diſcovered them himſelf.

4. It is managed in a great meaſure *in the form of the moſt eaſy reaſoning*, always ariſing from ſomething aſſerted or known in the foregoing *anſwer*, and ſo proceeding to enquire ſomething unknown in the following *queſtion*, which again makes way for the next *anſwer*. Now ſuch an exerciſe is very alluring and entertaining to the underſtanding, while its own reaſoning powers

are all along employed; and that without labour or difficulty, becauſe the queriſt finds out and propoſes all the intermediate ideas or middle terms.

IV. THERE is a method very near a-kin to this, which has much obtained of late, *viz. writing controverſies by queſtions only*, or confirming or refuting any poſition, or perſuading to or dehorting from any practice, by the mere propoſal of *queries*. *The anſwer* to them is ſuppoſed to be ſo plain and ſo neceſſary, that they are not expreſſed, becauſe the query itſelf carries a convincing argument in it, and ſeems to determine what the *anſwer* muſt be.

V. IF Chriſtian catechiſms could be framed in the manner of a *Socratical* diſpute by queſtion and anſwer, it would wonderfully enlighten the minds of children, and it would improve their intellectual and reaſoning powers, at the ſame time that it leads them into the knowledge of religion: and it is upon one account well ſuited to the capacity of children; for the *queſtions* may be pretty numerous, and the queriſt muſt not proceed too ſwiftly towards the determination of his point propoſed, that he may with more eaſe, with brighter evidence, and with ſurer ſucceſs, draw the learner on to aſſent to thoſe *principles* ſtep by ſtep, from whence the *final concluſion* will naturally ariſe. The only inconvenience would be this, that if children were to reaſon out all their way entirely into the knowledge of every part of their religion, it would draw common catechiſms into too large a volume for their leiſure, attention, or memory.

Yet thoſe who explain their catechiſms to them may, by due application and forethought, inſtruct them in this manner.

CHAP. XII.

Of Forenſic DISPUTES.

I.

THE *Forum* was a public place in *Rome* where lawyers and orators made their ſpeeches before the proper judge in matters of property, or in criminal caſes, to accuſe or excuſe, to complain or defend: thence all ſorts of diſputations in public aſſemblies or courts of juſtice, where ſeveral perſons make their diſtinct ſpeeches for or againſt any perſon or thing whatſoever, but more eſpecially in civil matters, may come under the name of *forenſic diſputes*.

II. THIS is practiſed not only in the *courts of judicature*, where a ſingle perſon ſits to judge of the truth or goodneſs of any cauſe, and to determine according to the weight of reaſons on either ſide; but it is uſed alſo in *political ſenates or parliaments*, *eccleſiaſtical ſynods*, and *aſſemblies* of various kinds.

In theſe aſſemblies generally one perſon is choſen *chairman* or *moderator*, not to give a determination to the controverſy, but chiefly to keep the ſeveral ſpeakers to the rules of order and decency in their conduct; but the final determination of the queſtions ariſes from the *majority of opinions* or *votes* in the aſſembly, according as they are or ought to be ſwayed by the ſuperior weight of reaſon appearing in the ſeveral ſpeeches that are made.

III. THE method of proceeding is uſually in ſome ſuch form as this. The firſt perſon who ſpeaks when the court is ſet, opens the caſe either more briefly or at large, and propoſes the caſe to the judge or the chairman, or moderator of the aſſembly, and gives his own reaſons for his opinion in the caſe propoſed.

IV. THIS perſon is ſucceeded by one, or perhaps two or ſeveral more, who paraphraſe on the ſame ſubject, and argue on the ſame ſide of the queſtion; they

confirm what the firſt has ſpoken, and urge new *reaſons* to enforce the ſame: then thoſe who are of a different opinion ſtand up and make their ſeveral ſpeeches in a ſucceſſion, oppoſing the cauſe which others have maintained, giving their *reaſons* againſt it, and endeavouring to refute the arguments whereby the firſt ſpeakers have ſupported it.

V. AFTER this, one and another riſes up to make their *replies*, to vindicate or to condemn, to eſtabliſh or to confute what has been offered before on each ſide of the queſtion; till at laſt, according to the rules, orders, cuſtoms of the court or aſſembly, the controverſy is decided, either by a *ſingle judge* or the *ſuffrage of the aſſembly*.

VI. WHERE the queſtion or matter in debate conſiſts of ſeveral parts, after it is once opened by the firſt or ſecond ſpeaker, ſometimes thoſe who follow take each of them a particular part of the debate, according to their inclination or their prior agreement, and apply themſelves to argue upon that ſingle point only, that ſo the whole *complexion* of the debate may not be thrown into confuſion by the variety of ſubjects, if every ſpeaker ſhould handle all the ſubjects of debate.

VII. BEFORE the final ſentence or determination is given, it is uſual to have the reaſons and arguments, which have been offered on both ſides, ſummed up and repreſented in a more compendious manner; and this is done either by the appointed *judge of the court*, or the *chairman*, or ſome *noted perſon* in the aſſembly, that ſo judgment may proceed upon the fulleſt ſurvey of the whole ſubject, that as far as poſſible in human affairs nothing may be done contrary to truth or juſtice.

VIII. As this is a practice in which multitudes of gentlemen, beſides thoſe of the learned profeſſions, may be engaged, at leaſt in their maturer years of life, ſo it would be a very proper and uſeful thing to introduce this cuſtom into our academies, *viz.* to propoſe caſes, and let the ſtudents debate them in a *forenſic* manner in the preſence of their tutors. There was ſomething of this kind practiſed by the *Roman* youth

in their ſchools, in order to train them up for orators, both in the *forum* and in the *ſenate*. Perhaps *Juvenal* gives ſome hints of it when he ſays,

——————— *et nos*
Conſilium dedimus Sylæ, privatus ut altum
Dormiret ——————— Sat. 1.

Where with men-boys I ſtrove to get renown,
Adviſing *Sylla* to a private gown,
That he might ſleep the ſounder.

Sometimes theſe were aſſigned to the boys as ſingle ſubjects of a theme or declamation: ſo the ſame poet ſpeaks ſarcaſtically to *Hannibal*,

——— *I demens, et ſævas curre per Alpes,*
Ut pueris placeas et declamatio fias. Sat. 10.

Go climb the rugged *Alps*, ambitious fool,
To pleaſe the boys, and be a theme at ſchool.

See more of this matter in *Kennet's* Antiquities of *Rome*, in the ſecond *Eſſay* on the *Roman* Education.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Academic or Scholaſtic Disputation.

THE common methods in which *diſputes* are managed in the *ſchools of learning* are theſe, *viz.*

I. The *tutor* appoints a *queſtion* in ſome of the ſciences to be debated amongſt his ſtudents: one of them undertakes to *affirm* or *deny* the queſtion, and to defend his aſſertion or negation, and to anſwer all objections againſt it; he is called the *reſpondent*: and the reſt of the ſtudents in the ſame claſs, or who purſue the ſame ſcience, are the *opponents*, who are appointed to diſpute or *raiſe objections* againſt the propoſition thus affirmed or denied.

II. EACH of the ſtudents ſucceſſively in their turn becomes the *reſpondent* or the defender of that propoſition, while the reſt *oppoſe* it alſo ſucceſſively in their turns.

III. IT is the buſineſs of the *reſpondent* to write a *theſis* in *Latin*, or ſhort diſcourſe on the queſtion propoſed; and he either *affirms* or *denies* the queſtion according to the opinion of the tutor, which is ſuppoſed to be the truth, and he reads it at the beginning of the diſpute.

IV. IN his diſcourſe (which is written with as great accuracy as the youth is capable of) he explains the terms of the queſtion, frees them from all ambiguity, fixes their ſenſe, declares the true intent and meaning of the queſtion itſelf, ſeparates it from other queſtions with which it may have been complicated, and diſtinguiſhes it from other queſtions which may happen to be a-kin to it, and then pronounces in the *negative* or *affirmative* concerning it.

V. WHEN this is done, then in the ſecond part of his diſcourſe he gives his own ſtrongeſt arguments to confirm the propoſition he has laid down, *i. e.* to vindicate his own ſide of the queſtion: but he does not uſually proceed to repreſent the *objections* againſt it, and to ſolve or anſwer them; for it is the buſineſs of the other ſtudents to raiſe objections in diſputing.

VI. *Note*, IN ſome ſchools the *reſpondent* is admitted to talk largely upon the queſtion with many flouriſhes and illuſtrations, to introduce great authorities from ancient and modern writings for the ſupport of it, and to ſcatter *Latin* reproaches in abundance on all thoſe who are of a different ſentiment. But this is not always permitted, nor ſhould it indeed be ever indulged, leſt it teach youth to reproach inſtead of reaſoning.

VII. WHEN the *reſpondent* has read over his *theſis* in the ſchool, the *junior ſtudent* makes an objection, and draws it up in the regular form of a ſyllogiſm: the *reſpondent* repeats the objection, and either denies the major or minor propoſition directly, or he diſtin-

guiſhes upon ſome word or phraſe in the major or minor, and ſhews in what ſenſe the propoſition may be true, but that *that* ſenſe does not affect the queſtion; and then declares that in the ſenſe which affects the preſent queſtion the propoſition is not true, and conſequently he denies it.

VIII. THEN the *opponent* proceeds by another ſyllogiſm to vindicate the propoſition that is denied; again the *reſpondent* anſwers by denying or diſtinguiſhing.

Thus the diſputation goes on in a *ſeries or ſucceſſion of ſyllogiſms and anſwers*, till the *objector* is ſilenced, and has no more to ſay.

IX. WHEN he can go no further, the *next ſtudent* begins to propoſe his objection, and then the *third* and the *fourth*, even to the *ſenior*, who is the laſt opponent.

X. DURING this time the *tutor* ſits in the chair as *preſident* or *moderator*, to ſee that the rules of diſputation and decency be obſerved on both ſides; and to admoniſh each diſputant of any irregularity in their conduct. His work is alſo to illuſtrate and explain the anſwer or diſtinction of the *reſpondent* where it is obſcure, to ſtrengthen it where it is weak, and to correct it where it is falſe: and when the *reſpondent* is pinched with a ſtrong objection, and is at a loſs for an anſwer, the *moderator* aſſiſts him, and ſuggeſts ſome anſwer to the objection of the *opponent*, in defence of the queſtion, according to his own opinion or ſentiment.

XI. IN public diſputes, where the *opponents* and *reſpondents* chuſe their own ſide of the queſtion, the *moderator*'s work is not to favour either diſputant; but he only ſits as *preſident* to ſee that the laws of diſputation be obſerved, and a *decorum* maintained.

XII. Now the *laws of diſputation* relate either to the *opponent*, or to the *reſpondent*, or to *both*.

The *laws obliging the opponent* are theſe.

1. That he muſt directly contradict the propoſition of the *reſpondent*, and not merely attack any of the arguments whereby the *reſpondent* has ſupported that propoſition: for it is one thing to *confute a ſingle argument* of the reſpondent, and another to *confute the theſis* itſelf.

2. (Which is a-kin to the former) he must contradict or oppose the very sense and intention of the proposition as the respondent has stated it, and not merely oppose the words of the thesis in any other sense; for this would be the way to plunge the dispute into ambiguity and darkness, to talk beside the question, to wrangle about words, and to attack a proposition different from what the *respondent* has espoused, which is called *ignoratio elenchi*.

3. He must propose his argument in a plain, short, and syllogistic form, according to the rules of logic, without flying to *fallacies* or *sophisms*; and as far as may be, he should use *categorical* syllogisms.

4. Though the *respondent* may be attacked either upon a point of his own concession, which is called *argumentum ex concessis*, or by reducing him to an absurdity, which is called *reductio ad absurdum*, yet it is the neatest, the most useful, and the best sort of disputation where the *opponent* draws his objections from the nature of the question itself.

5. Where the *respondent* denies any proposition, the *opponent*, if he proceed, must directly vindicate and confirm that proposition, *i. e.* he must make that proposition the conclusion of his next syllogism.

6. Where the *respondent* limits or distinguishes any proposition, the *opponent* must directly prove his own proposition in that sense, and according to that member of the distinction in which the *respondent* denied it.

XIII. The *laws that oblige the respondent* are these.

1. To repeat the argument of the *opponent* in the very same words in which it was proposed, before he attempts to answer it.

2. If the syllogism be false in the *logical form* of it, he must discover the fault according to the *rules of logic*.

3. If the argument does not directly and effectually oppose his *thesis*, he must shew this mistake, and make it appear that his *thesis* is safe, even though the argument of the *opponent* be admitted: or at least, that the argument does only aim at it collaterally, or at a distance, and not directly overthrow it, or conclude against it.

4. Where the *matter* of the *opponent*'s objection is faulty in any part of it, the *respondent* must grant what is true in it, he must deny what is false, he must distinguish or limit the proposition which is ambiguous or doubtful; and then granting the sense in which it is true, he must deny the sense in which it is false.

5. If an *hypothetic* proposition be false, the *respondent* must deny the *consequence*: if a *disjunctive*, he must deny the *disjunction*: if a *categoric* or *relative*, he must simply deny it.

6. It is sometimes allowed for the *respondent* to use an *indirect answer* after he has answered *directly*: and he may also shew how the *opponent*'s argument may be retorted against himself.

XIV. The *laws that oblige both disputants* are these.

1. Sometimes it is necessary there should be a mention of certain *general principles* in which they both agree, relating to the question, that so they may not dispute on those things which either are or ought to have been first granted on both sides.

2. When the state of the controversy is well known, and plainly determined and agreed, it must not be altered by *either disputant* in the course of the disputation; and the *respondent* especially should keep a watchful eye on the *opponent* in this matter.

3. Let neither *party* invade the province of the other; especially let the *respondent* take heed that he does not turn *opponent*, except in retorting the argument upon his adversary after a direct response; and even this is allowed only as an illustration or confirmation of his own response.

4. Let each wait with patience till the other has done speaking. It is a piece of rudeness to interrupt another in his speech.

Yet, though the *disputants* have not this liberty, the *moderator* may do it, when either of the *disputants* breaks the rules, and he may interpose so far as to keep them to order.

XV. It must be confest there are some *advantages* to be attained by *academical disputation*. It gives u-

gour and briſkneſs to the mind thus exercised, and relieves the languor of private ſtudy and meditation. It ſharpens the wit and all the inventive powers. It makes the thoughts active, and ſends them on all ſides to find arguments and anſwers both for oppoſition and defence. It gives opportunity of viewing the ſubject of diſcourſe on all ſides, and of learning what inconveniences, difficulties, and objections attend particular opinions. It furniſhes the ſoul with various occaſions of ſtarting ſuch thoughts as otherwiſe would never have come into the mind. It makes a ſtudent more expert in attacking and refuting an error, as well as in vindicating a truth. It inſtructs the ſcholar in the various methods of warding off the force of objections, and of diſcovering and refelling the ſubtle tricks of ſophiſters. It procures alſo a freedom and readineſs of ſpeech, and raiſes the modeſt and diffident genius to a due degree of courage.

XVI. But there are ſome very *grievous inconveniences* that may ſometimes overbalance all theſe *advantages*. For many young ſtudents, by a conſtant habit of diſputing, grow impudent and audacious, proud and diſdainful, talkative and impertinent, and render themſelves intolerable by an obſtinate humour of maintaining whatever they have aſſerted, as well as by a ſpirit of contradiction, oppoſing almoſt every thing that they hear. The diſputation itſelf often awakens the paſſions of ambition, emulation, and anger; it carries away the mind from that calm and ſedate temper which is ſo neceſſary to contemplate truth.

XVII. It is evident alſo, that by frequent exerciſes of this ſort, wherein *opinions true and falſe* are argued, ſupported, and refuted on both ſides; the mind of man is led by inſenſible degrees to an uncertain and fluctuating temper, and falls into danger of a *ſceptical humour*, which never comes to an eſtabliſhment in any doctrines. Many perſons by this means become much more ready to oppoſe whatſoever is offered in ſearching out truth; they hardly wait till they have read or heard the ſentiment of any perſon, before their heads

are buſily employed to ſeek out arguments againſt it. They grow naturally ſharp in finding out difficulties; and by indulging this humour, they converſe with the dark and doubtful parts of a ſubject ſo long, till they almoſt render themſelves incapable of receiving the full evidence of a propoſition, and acknowledging the light of truth. It has ſome tendency to make a youth a *carping critic*, rather than a *judicious* man.

XVIII. I WOULD add yet further, that in theſe diſputations the *reſpondent* is generally appointed to maintain the ſuppoſed truth, that is, the *tutor's opinion*. But all the *opponents* are buſy and warmly engaged in finding arguments againſt the truth. Now if a ſprightly young genius happens to manage his argument ſo well as to puzzle and gravel the *reſpondent*, and perhaps to perplex the *moderator* a little too, he is ſoon tempted to ſuppoſe his argument unanſwerable, and the truth entirely to lie on his ſide. The pleaſure which he takes in having found a *ſophiſm* which has great appearance of reaſon, and which he himſelf has managed with ſuch ſucceſs, becomes perhaps a ſtrong prejudice to engage his inward ſentiments in favour of his argument, and in oppoſition to the ſuppoſed truth.

XIX. YET perhaps it may be poſſible to reduce *ſcholaſtic diſputations* under ſuch a guard, as may in ſome meaſure prevent moſt of theſe abuſes of them, and the unhappy events that too often attend them: for it is pity that an exerciſe which has ſome valuable benefits attending it, ſhould be utterly thrown away, if it be poſſible to ſecure young minds againſt the abuſe of it; for which purpoſe ſome of theſe *directions* may ſeem proper.

XX. *GENERAL directions for ſcholaſtic diſputes.*

1. Never diſpute upon mere trifles, things that are utterly uſeleſs to be known, under a vain pretence of ſharpening the wit: for the ſame advantage may be derived from ſolid and uſeful ſubjects, and thus two happy ends may be attained at once. Or if ſuch diſputations are always thought dangerous in important matters, let them be utterly abandoned.

2. Do not make infinite and unſearchable things the matter of diſpute, nor ſuch propoſitions as are made up of mere words without ideas, leſt it lead young perſons into a moſt unhappy habit of *talking without a meaning*, and boldly determine upon things that are hardly within the reach of human capacity.

3. Let not obvious and known truths, or ſome of the moſt plain and certain propoſitions be bandied about in a diſputation, for a mere trial of ſkill: for he that oppoſes them in this manner will be in danger of contracting a habit of oppoſing all evidence, will acquire a *ſpirit of contradiction*, and pride himſelf in a power of reſiſting the brighteſt light, and fighting againſt the ſtrongeſt proofs: this will inſenſibly injure the mind, and tends greatly to an univerſal ſcepticiſm.

Upon the whole, therefore, the moſt proper ſubjects of diſpute ſeem to be, thoſe queſtions which are not of the very higheſt importance and certainty, nor of the meaneſt and trifling kind; but rather the intermediate queſtions between theſe two; and there is a large ſufficiency of them in the ſciences. But this I put as a mere propoſal, to be determined by the more learned and prudent.

4. It would be well if every diſpute could be ſo ordered as to be a means of ſearching out truth, and not to gain a triumph. Then each *diſputant* might come to the work without bias and prejudice, with a deſire of truth, and not with ambition of glory and victory.

Nor ſhould the aim and deſign of the *reſpondent* be to avoid artfully and eſcape the difficulties which the *opponent* offers, but to diſcuſs them thoroughly, and ſolve them fairly, if they are capable of being ſolved.

Again, let the *opponent* be ſolicitous not to darken and confound the reſponſes that are given him by freſh ſubtilties; but let him bethink himſelf whether they are not a juſt anſwer to the objection, and be honeſtly ready to perceive and accept them, and yield to them.

5. For this end, let both the *reſpondent* and *opponent* uſe the cleareſt and moſt diſtinct and expreſſive lan-

guage in which they can clothe their thoughts. Let them ſeek and practiſe brevity and perſpicuity on both ſides, without long declamations, tedious circumlocutions, and rhetorical flouriſhes.

If there happen to be any doubt or obſcurity on either ſide, let neither the one or the other ever refuſe to give a fair explication of the words they uſe.

6. They ſhould not indulge ridicule, either of perſons or things in their diſputations. They ſhould abſtain from all banter and jeſt, laughter and merriment. Theſe are things that break in upon that philoſophical gravity, ſedateneſs, and ſerenity of temper which ought to be obſerved in every ſearch after truth. However, an argument on ſome ſubjects may be ſometimes clothed with a little pleaſantry, yet a jeſt or witticiſm ſhould never be uſed inſtead of an argument, nor ſhould it ever be ſuffered to paſs for a real and ſolid proof.

But eſpecially if the ſubject be ſacred or divine, and have nothing in it comical or ridiculous, all ludicrous turns, and jocoſe or comical airs, ſhould be entirely excluded, leſt young minds become tinctured with a ſilly and profane ſort of ridicule, and learn to jeſt and trifle with the awful ſolemnities of religion.

7. Nor ſhould ſarcaſm and reproach, or inſolent language, ever be uſed among fair diſputants. Turn not off from things to ſpeak of perſons. Leave all noiſy conteſts, all immodeſt clamours, brawling language, and eſpecially all perſonal ſcandal and ſcurrility to the meaneſt part of the vulgar world. Let your manner be all candour and gentleneſs, patient and ready to hear, humbly zealous to inform and be informed; you ſhould be free and pleaſant in every anſwer and behaviour, rather like *well-bred gentlemen* in polite converſation, than like *noiſy* and *contentious wranglers*.

8. If the *opponent* ſees victory to incline to his ſide, let him be content to ſhew the force of his argument to the intelligent part of the company, without too importunate and petulant demands of an anſwer, and without inſulting over his antagoniſt, or putting the

modeſty of the *reſpondent* to the bluſh. Nor let the *reſpondent* triumph over the *opponent*, when he is ſilent and replies no more. On which ſide ſoever victory declares herſelf, let neither of them manage with ſuch unpleaſing and inſolent airs, as to awaken thoſe evil paſſions of pride, anger, ſhame, or reſentment on either ſide, which alienate the mind from truth, render it obſtinate in the defence of an error, and never ſuffer it to part with any of its old opinions.

In ſhort, when truth evidently appears on either ſide, let them learn to yield to conviction. When either party is at a *nonplus*, let them confeſs the difficulty, and deſire preſent aſſiſtance, or further time and retirement to conſider of the matter, and not rack their preſent invention to find out little ſhifts to avoid the force and evidence of truth.

9. Might it not be a ſafer practice, in order to attain the beſt ends of diſputation, and to avoid ſome of the ill effects of it, if the *opponents* were ſometimes engaged on the ſide of truth, and produced their arguments in oppoſition to error? And what if the *reſpondent* was appointed to ſupport the error, and defend it as well as he could, till he was forced to yield at leaſt to thoſe arguments of the opponents, which appear to be really juſt, and ſtrong, and unanſwerable?

In this practice, the *theſis* of the *reſpondent* ſhould only be a fair ſtating of the queſtion, with ſome of the chief objections againſt the truth propoſed and ſolved.

Perhaps this practice might not ſo eaſily be perverted and abuſed to raiſe a *cavilling*, *diſputative*, and *ſceptical* temper in the minds of youth.

I confeſs, in this method which I now propoſe, there would be one among the ſtudents, *viz.* the *reſpondent*, always engaged in the ſupport of ſuppoſed error; but all the reſt would be exerciſing their talents in arguing for the ſuppoſed truth: whereas in the common methods of diſputation in the ſchools, eſpecially where the ſtudents are numerous, each ſingle ſtudent is perpetually employed to oppoſe the truth and vindicate

error, except once in a long time, when it comes to his turn to be *respondent*.

10. Upon the whole, it seems necessary that these methods of disputation should be learnt in the schools, in order to teach students better to defend truth, and to refute error, both in writing and conversation, where the scholastic forms are utterly neglected.

But after all, the advantage which youth may gain by disputations depends much on the *tutor* or *moderator*: he should manage with such prudence both in the disputation and at the end of it, as to make all the *disputants* know the very point of controversy wherein it consists; he should manifest the fallacy of sophistical objections, and confirm the solid arguments and answers. This might teach students how to make the *art of disputation* useful for the searching out the truth and the defence of it, that it may not be learnt and practised only as an *art of wrangling*, which reigned in the schools several hundred years, and divested the growing reason of youth of its best hopes and improvements.

CHAP. XIV.

Of Study, *or* Meditation.

I.

IT has been proved and established in some of the foregoing chapters, that neither our own *observations*, nor our *reading the labours of the learned*, nor the *attendance on the best lectures of instruction*, nor enjoying the *brightest conversation*, can ever make a man truly knowing and wise, without the *labours of his own reason* in surveying, examining, and judging concerning all subjects upon the best evidence he can acquire. A *good genius*, or *sagacity of thought*, a *happy judgment*, a *capacious memory*, and *large opportunities of observation and converse*, will do much of themselves towards the cultivation of the mind, where they are well im-

proved: but where, to the advantage of *learned lectures*, *living inſtructions*, and *well choſen* books, *diligence* and *ſtudy* are ſuperadded, this man has all human aids concurring to raiſe him to a ſuperior degree of wiſdom and knowledge.

Under the preceding heads of diſcourſe, it has been already declared how our own *meditation* and *reflection* ſhould examine, cultivate, and improve all other methods and advantages of enriching the underſtanding. What remains in this *chapter* is to give ſome *further occaſional hints* how to employ our own thoughts, what ſort of ſubjects we ſhould meditate on, and in what manner we ſhould regulate our ſtudies, and how we may improve our judgment, ſo as in the moſt effectual and compendious way to attain ſuch knowledge as may be moſt uſeful for every man in his circumſtances of life, and particularly for thoſe of the learned profeſſions.

II. THE firſt direction for youth is this, *learn betimes to diſtinguiſh between words and things.* Get clear and plain ideas of the things you are ſet to ſtudy. Do not content yourſelves with mere words and names, leſt your laboured improvements only amaſs a heap of unintelligible phraſes, and you feed upon huſks inſtead of kernels. This rule is of unknown uſe in every ſcience.

But the greateſt and moſt common danger is in the ſacred ſcience of theology, where ſettled terms and phraſes have been pronounced divine and orthodox, which yet have had no meaning in them. The *ſcholaſtic divinity* would furniſh us with numerous inſtances of this folly; and yet for many ages all *truth* and all *hereſy* have been determined by ſuch ſenſeleſs teſts, and by words without ideas; ſuch *Shibboleths* as theſe have decided the ſecular fates of men; and biſhoprics or burning, mitres or faggots, have been the rewards of different perſons, according as they pronounced theſe conſecrated ſyllables, or not pronounced them. To defend them, was all piety, and pomp, and triumph; to deſpiſe them, to doubt or deny them, was torture and death. A thouſand thank-offerings are due to

that Providence which has delivered our age and our nation from these absurd iniquities! O that every specimen and shadow of this madness were banished from our schools and churches in every shape!

III. Let not young students *apply themselves to search out deep, dark, and abstruse matters, far above their reach*, or spend their labour in *any peculiar subjects, for which they have not the advantages of necessary antecedent learning, or books, or observations.* Let them not be too hasty to know things above their present powers, nor plunge their inquiries at once into the depths of knowledge, nor begin to study any science in the middle of it; this will confound rather than enlighten the understanding: such practices may happen to discourage and jade the mind by an attempt above its power, it may balk the understanding, and create an aversion to future diligence, and perhaps by despair may forbid the pursuit of that subject for ever afterwards; as a limb overstrained by lifting a weight above its power, may never recover its former agility and vigour; or if it does, the man may be frighted from ever exerting his strength again.

IV. Nor yet let any student on the other hand *fright himself at every turn with unsurmountable difficulties*, nor imagine that the truth is wrapt up in impenetrable darkness. These are formidable *spectres* which the understanding raises sometimes to flatter its own laziness. Those things which in a remote and confused view seem very obscure and perplexed, may be approached by gentle and regular steps, and may then unfold and explain themselves at large to the eye. The hardest problems in *geometry*, and the most intricate schemes or diagrams, may be explicated and understood step by step: every great mathematician bears a constant witness to this observation.

V. In learning any new thing, there should *be as little as possible first proposed* to the mind at once, and that being understood and fully mastered, proceed then to the next adjoining part yet unknown. This is a slow, but safe and sure way to arrive at knowledge.

If the mind apply itſelf at firſt to eaſier ſubjects, and things near akin to what is already known, and then advance to the more remote and knotty parts of knowledge by ſlow degrees, it will be able in this manner to cope with great difficulties, and prevail over them with amazing and happy ſucceſs.

Mathon happened to dip into the two laſt chapters of a new book of *geometry* and *menſurations*; as ſoon as he ſaw it, and was frighted with the complicated diagrams which he found there, about the *fruſtums of cones* and *pyramids*, &c. and ſome deep demonſtrations among *conic ſections*; he ſhut the book again in deſpair, and imagined none but a Sir *Iſaac Newton* was ever fit to read it. But his tutor happily perſuaded him to begin the firſt pages about lines and angles; and he found ſuch ſurpriſing pleaſure in three weeks time in the victories he daily obtained, that at laſt he became one of the chief geometers of his age.

VI. *ENGAGE not the mind in the intenſe purſuit of too many things at once*; eſpecially ſuch as have no relation to one another. This will be ready to diſtract the underſtanding, and hinder it from attaining perfection in any one ſubject of ſtudy. Such a practice gives a ſlight ſmattering of ſeveral ſciences, without any ſolid and ſubſtantial knowledge of them, and without any real and valuable improvement; and though two or three ſorts of ſtudy may be uſefully carried on at once, to entertain the mind with variety, that it may not be over-tired with one ſort of thoughts, yet a multitude of ſubjects will too much diſtract the attention, and weaken the application of the mind to any one of them.

Where two or three ſciences are purſued at the ſame time, if one of them be dry, abſtracted, and unpleaſant, as *logic*, *metaphyſics*, *law*, *languages*, let another be more entertaining and agreeable, to ſecure the mind from wearineſs and averſion to ſtudy. Delight ſhould be intermingled with labour as far as poſſible, to allure us to bear the fatigue of dry ſtudies the better. *Poetry*, *practical mathematics*, *hiſtory*, &c. are ge-

nerally eſteemed entertaining ſtudies, and may be happily uſed for this purpoſe. Thus while we relieve a dull and heavy hour by ſome alluring employments of the mind, our very diverſions enrich our underſtandings, and our pleaſure is turned into profit.

VII. In the purſuit of every valuable ſubject of knowledge *keep the end always in your eye, and be not diverted from it by every pretty trifle you meet with in the way.* Some perſons have ſuch a wandering genius, that they are ready to purſue every incidental theme or occaſional idea, till they have loſt ſight of their original ſubject. Theſe are the men who, when they are engaged in converſation, prolong their ſtory by dwelling on every incident, and ſwell their narrative with long parentheſes, till they have loſt their firſt deſign; like a man who is ſent in queſt of ſome great treaſure, but he ſteps aſide to gather every flower he finds, or ſtands ſtill to dig up every ſhining pebble he meets with in his way, till the treaſure is forgotten and never found.

VIII. *EXERT your care, ſkill, and diligence about every ſubject, and every queſtion, in a juſt proportion to the importance of it,* together with the *danger and bad conſequences of ignorance or error therein.* Many excellent advantages flow from this one *direction.*

1. This rule will teach you to be very careful in *gaining ſome general and fundamental truths both in philoſophy, in religion, and in human life;* becauſe they are of the higheſt moment, and conduct our thoughts with eaſe into a thouſand inferior and particular propoſitions. Such is that great principle in natural philoſophy, the *doctrine of gravitation,* or *mutual tendency of all bodies toward each other,* which Sir *Iſaac Newton* has ſo well eſtabliſhed, and from which he has drawn the ſolution of a multitude of appearances in the heavenly bodies as well as on earth.

Such is that golden principle of *morality* which our bleſſed Lord has given us, *Do that to others which you think juſt and reaſonable that others ſhould do to you,*

which is almoſt ſufficient in itſelf to ſolve all caſes of conſcience which relate to our neighbour.

Such are thoſe principles in religion, that a *rational creature is accountable to his Maker for all his actions*; that *the ſoul of man is immortal*; that *there is a future ſtate of happineſs and of miſery depending on our behaviour in the preſent life, on which all our religious practices are built or ſupported.*

We ſhould be very curious in *examining all propoſitions that pretend to this honour* of being *general principles*: and we ſhould not without juſt evidence admit into this rank mere matters of common fame, or commonly received opinions; no, nor the general determinations of the learned, or the eſtabliſhed articles of any church or nation, *&c.* for there are many learned preſumptions, many ſynodical and national miſtakes, many eſtabliſhed falſehoods, as well as many vulgar errors, wherein multitudes of men have followed one another for whole ages almoſt blindfold. It is of great importance for every man to be careful that theſe general principles are juſt and true; for one error may lead us into thouſands, which will naturally follow, if once a *leading falſehood* be admitted.

2. This rule will direct us to be *more careful about practical points than mere ſpeculations*, ſince they are commonly of much greater uſe and conſequence: therefore the ſpeculations of *algebra*, the doctrine of *infinities*, and the *quadrature of curves in mathematical learning*, together with all the train of theorems in *natural philoſophy*, ſhould by no means intrench upon our ſtudies of *morality* and *virtue*. Even in the ſcience of *divinity* itſelf, the ſublimeſt ſpeculations of it are not of that worth and value, as the rules of duty towards God and towards men.

3. *IN matters of practice we ſhould be moſt careful to fix our end right*, and wiſely determine the *ſcope at which we aim*; becauſe that is to direct us in the choice and uſe of all the *means to attain it*. If our end be wrong, all our labour in the means will be vain, or perhaps ſo much the more pernicious as they are bet-

ter ſuited to attain that miſtaken end. If mere ſenſible pleaſure, or human grandeur or wealth, be our chief end, we ſhall chooſe means contrary to piety and virtue, and proceed apace toward real miſery.

4. This rule will *engage our beſt powers and deepeſt attention* in *the affairs of religion*, and things that *relate to a future world*; for thoſe propoſitions which extend only to the intereſt of the preſent life, are but of ſmall importance when compared with thoſe that have influence upon our everlaſting concernments.

5. And even in the affairs of religion, if we walk by the conduct of this rule, we ſhall be much more laborious in our inquiries into the *neceſſary and fundamental articles of faith and practice* than the *leſſer appendices of Chriſtianity*. The great doctrines of *repentance towards God*, *faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, *with love to men*, and *univerſal holineſs*, will employ our beſt and brighteſt hours and meditations; while the *mint*, *aniſe*, and *cummin*, the *geſtures*, and *veſtures*, and *fringes of religion*, will be regarded no further than they have a plain and evident connexion with *faith* and *love*, with *holineſs* and *peace*.

6. This rule will make us ſolicitous not only to *avoid ſuch errors*, *whoſe influence will ſpread wide into the whole ſcheme of our own knowledge and practice*, but ſuch miſtakes alſo whoſe *influence would be yet more extenſive and injurious to others*, *as well as to ourſelves*; perhaps to many perſons or many families, to a whole church, a town, a country, or a kingdom. Upon this account, perſons who are called to inſtruct others, who are raiſed to any eminence either in church or ſtate, ought to be careful in ſettling their principles in matters relating to the *civil*, the *moral*, or the *religious* life, leſt a miſtake of theirs ſhould diffuſe wide miſchief, ſhould draw along with it moſt pernicious conſequences, and perhaps extend to following generations.

Theſe are ſome of the advantages which ariſe from the eighth rule, *viz.* Purſue every inquiry and ſtudy in proportion to its real value and importance.

IX. HAVE a care leſt *ſome beloved notion, or ſome darling ſcience, ſo far prevail over your mind, as to give a ſovereign tincture to all your other ſtudies*, and diſcolour all your ideas; like a perſon in the jaundice, who ſpreads a yellow ſcene with his eyes over all the objects which he meets. I have known a man of peculiar ſkill in *muſic*, and much devoted to that ſcience, who found out a great reſemblance of the *Athanaſian doctrine of the Trinity* in every ſingle note, and he thought it carried ſomething of argument in it to prove that doctrine. I have read of another, who accommodated the ſeven days of the firſt week of creation to ſeven notes of muſic, and thus the whole creation became harmonious.

Under this influence, derived from *mathematical* ſtudies, ſome have been tempted to caſt all their *logical*, their *metaphyſical*, and their *theological* and *moral* learning into the method of *mathematicians*, and bring every thing relating to thoſe *abſtracted*, or thoſe *practical* ſciences, under *theorems*, *problems*, *poſtulates*, *ſcholiums*, *corollaries*, &c. whereas the matter ought always to direct the method; for all ſubjects or matters of thought cannot be moulded or ſubdued to one form. Neither the rules for the conduct of the underſtanding, nor the doctrines nor duties of religion and virtue, can be exhibited naturally in figures and diagrams. Things are to be conſidered as they are in themſelves; their natures are inflexible, and their natural relations unalterable; and therefore in order to conceive them aright, we muſt bring our underſtandings to things, and not pretend to bend and ſtrain things to comport with our fancies and forms.

X. *SUFFER not any beloved ſtudy to prejudice your mind ſo far in favour of it as to deſpiſe all other learning.* This is a fault of ſome little ſouls who have got a ſmattering of *aſtronomy*, *chemiſtry*, *metaphyſics*, *hiſtory*, &c. and for want of a due acquaintance with other ſciences, make a ſcoff at them all in compariſon of their favourite ſcience. Their underſtandings are hereby cooped up in narrow bounds, ſo that they never look abroad

into other provinces of the intellectual world, which are more beautiful perhaps, and more fruitful than their own: if they would search a little into other sciences, they might not only find treasures of new knowledge, but might be furnished also with rich hints of thought, and glorious assistances to cultivate that very province to which they have confined themselves.

Here I would always give some grains of allowance to the sacred science of *theology*, which is incomparably superior to all the rest, as it teaches us the knowledge of God, and the way to his eternal favour. This is that noble study which is every man's duty, and every one who can be called a rational creature is capable of it. This is that science which would truly enlarge the minds of men, were it studied with that freedom, that unbiassed love of truth, and that sacred charity which it teaches; and if it were not made, contrary to its own nature, the occasion of strife, faction, malignity, a narrow spirit, and unreasonable impositions on the mind and practice. Let this therefore stand always chief.

XI. *LET every particular study have due and proper time assigned it, and let not a favourite science prevail with you to lay out such hours upon it, as ought to be employed upon the more necessary and more important affairs or studies of your profession.* When you have, according to the best of your discretion, and according to the circumstances of your life, fixed proper hours for particular studies, endeavour to keep to those rules; not indeed with a superstitious precisenes, but with some good degrees of a regular constancy. Order and method in a course of study saves much time, and makes large improvements: such a fixation of certain hours will have a happy influence to secure you from trifling and wasting away your minutes in impertinence.

XII. *DO not apply yourself to any one study at one time longer than the mind is capable of giving a close attention to it without weariness or wandering.* Do not over-fatigue the spirits at any time, lest the mind be

ſeized with a laſſitude, and thereby be tempted to nauſeate and grow tired of a particular ſubject before you have finiſhed it.

XIII. In the beginning of your application to any new ſubject, *be not too uneaſy under preſent difficulties that occur, nor too importunate and impatient for anſwers and ſolutions to any queſtions that ariſe.* Perhaps a little more ſtudy, a little further acquaintance with the ſubject, a little time and experience, will ſolve thoſe difficulties, untie the knot, and make your doubts vaniſh: eſpecially if you are under the inſtruction of a tutor, he can inform you that your inquiries are perhaps too early, and that you have not yet learnt thoſe principles upon which the ſolution of ſuch a difficulty depends.

XIV. *DO not expect to arrive at certainty in every ſubject which you purſue.* There are a hundred things wherein we mortals in this dark and imperfect ſtate muſt be content with probability, where our beſt light and reaſonings will reach no further. We muſt balance arguments as juſtly as we can, and where we cannot find weight enough on either ſide to determine the ſcale with ſovereign force and aſſurance, we muſt content ourſelves perhaps with a ſmall preponderation. This will give us a probable opinion, and thoſe probabilities are ſufficient for the daily determination of a thouſand actions in human life, and many times even in matters of religion.

It is admirably well expreſſed by a late writer, When there is great ſtrength of argument ſet before us, if we will refuſe to do what appears moſt fit for us, until every little objection is removed, we ſhall never take one wiſe reſolution as long as we live.

Suppoſe I had been honeſtly and long ſearching what religion I ſhould chooſe, and yet I could not find that the arguments in defence of *Chriſtianity* aroſe to complete certainty, but went only ſo far as to give me probable evidence of the truth of it; though many difficulties ſtill remained, yet I ſhould think myſelf obliged to receive and practiſe that religion; for the God of nature and reaſon has bound us to aſſent and act ac-

cording to the beſt evidence we have, even though it be not abſolute and complete; and as he is our ſupreme Judge, his abounding goodneſs and equity will approve and acquit the man whoſe conſcience honeſtly and willingly ſeeks the beſt light, and obeys it as far as he can diſcover it.

But in matters of great importance in religion, let him join all due diligence with earneſt and humble prayer for divine aid in his inquiries; ſuch prayer and ſuch diligence as eternal concerns require, and ſuch as he may plead with courage before the Judge of all.

XV. *ENDEAVOUR to apply every ſpeculative ſtudy*, as far as poſſible, *to ſome practical uſe*, that both yourſelf and others may be the better for it. Inquiries even in natural philoſophy ſhould not be mere amuſements, and much leſs in the affairs of religion. Reſearches into the ſprings of natural bodies and their motions ſhould lead men to invent happy methods for the eaſe and convenience of human life; or at leaſt they ſhould be improved to awaken us to admire the wondrous wiſdom and contrivance of God our Creator in all the works of nature.

If we purſue mathematical ſpeculations, they will inure us to attend cloſely to any ſubject, to ſeek and gain clear ideas, to diſtinguiſh truth from falſehood, to judge juſtly, and to argue ſtrongly; and theſe ſtudies do more directly furniſh us with all the various rules of thoſe uſeful arts of life, viz. *meaſuring*, *building*, *ſailing*, &c.

Even our very inquiries and diſputations about *vacuum* or *ſpace*, and *atoms*, about *incommenſurable quantities*, and the *infinite diviſibility of matter*, and *eternal duration*, which ſeem to be purely ſpeculative, will ſhew us ſome good practical leſſons, will lead us to ſee the weakneſs of our nature, and ſhould teach us humility in arguing upon divine ſubjects and matters of ſacred revelation. This ſhould guard us againſt rejecting any doctrine which is expreſsly and evidently revealed, though we cannot fully underſtand it. It is good ſometimes to loſe and bewilder ourſelves in ſuch ſtudies for this very

reaſon, and to attain this practical advantage, this improvement in true modeſty of ſpirit.

XVI. THOUGH we ſhould always be ready to *change our ſentiments of things upon juſt conviction of their falſehood*, yet there is not the ſame neceſſity of *changing our accuſtomed* methods *of reading or ſtudy and practice*, even though we have not been led at firſt into the happieſt *method*. Our thoughts may be true, though we may have hit upon an improper order of thinking. Truth does not always depend upon the moſt convenient method. There may be a certain form and order in which we have long accuſtomed ourſelves to range our ideas and notions, which may be beſt for us now, though it was not originally beſt in itſelf. The *inconveniences* of changing may be much greater than the *conveniences* we could obtain by a new method.

As for inſtance; If a man in his younger days has ranged all his ſentiments in *theology* in the method of *Ames's Medulla Theologiæ*, or Biſhop *Uſher's Body of Divinity*, it may be much more natural and eaſy for him to continue to diſpoſe all his further acquirements in the ſame order, though perhaps neither of theſe treatiſes are in themſelves written in the moſt perfect method. So when we have long fixed our *caſes of ſhelves* in a library, and ranged our books in any particular order, *viz.* according to their languages, or according to their *ſubjects*, or according to the *alphabetical names of the authors*, &c. we are perfectly well acquainted with the order in which they now ſtand, and we can find any particular book which we ſeek, or add a new book which we have purchaſed, with much greater eaſe than we do in finer caſes of ſhelves where the books were ranged in any different manner whatſoever; any different poſition of the volumes would be new, and ſtrange, and troubleſome to us, and would not countervail the inconveniences of a change.

So if a man of forty years old has been taught to hold his pen awkwardly in his youth, and yet writes ſufficiently well for all the purpoſes of his ſtation, it is not worth while to teach him now the moſt accurate

methods of handling that inſtrument; for this would create him more trouble without equal advantage, and perhaps he might never attain to write better after he has placed all his fingers perfectly right with this new accuracy.

CHAP. XV.

Of fixing the Attention.

A STUDENT ſhould labour by all proper methods to acquire a *ſteady fixation of thought*. *Attention* is a very neceſſary thing in order to improve our minds. The evidence of truth does not always appear immediately, nor ſtrike the ſoul at firſt ſight. It is by *long attention* and *inſpection* that we arrive at evidence, and it is for want of it we judge falſely of many things. We make haſte to determine upon a ſlight and a ſudden view, we confirm our gueſſes which ariſe from a glance, we paſs a judgment while we have but a confuſed or obſcure perception, and thus plunge ourſelves into miſtakes. This is like a man, who walking in a miſt, or being at a great diſtance from any viſible object (ſuppoſe a *tree*, a *man*, a *horſe*, or a *church*), judges much amiſs of the figure, and ſituation, and colours of it, and ſometimes takes one for the other; whereas if he would but with-hold his judgment till he come nearer to it, or ſtay till clearer light comes, and then would fix his eyes longer upon it, he would ſecure himſelf from thoſe miſtakes.

Now in order to gain a greater *facility of attention*, we may obſerve theſe *rules*.

1. *GET a good liking to the ſtudy or knowledge you would purſue.* We may obſerve that there is not much difficulty in confining the mind to contemplate what we have a great deſire to know; and eſpecially if they are matters of ſenſe, or ideas which paint themſelves upon the fancy. It is but *acquiring an hearty good-will and reſolution to ſearch out and ſurvey the various properties and parts of ſuch objects*, and our attention will be en-

gaged if there be any delight or diverſion in the ſtudy or contemplation of them. Therefore *mathematical* ſtudies have a ſtrange influence towards fixing the attention of the mind, and giving a ſteadineſs to a wandering diſpoſition, becauſe they deal much in lines, figures, and numbers, which affect and pleaſe the ſenſe and imagination. *Hiſtories* have a ſtrong tendency the ſame way, for they engage the ſoul by a variety of ſenſible occurrences; when it hath begun, it knows not how to leave off; it longs to know the final event, through a natural curioſity that belongs to mankind. *Voyages* and *travels*, and accounts of ſtrange countries and ſtrange appearances, will aſſiſt in this work. This ſort of ſtudy detains the mind by the perpetual occurrence and expectation of ſomething new, and that which may gratefully ſtrike the imagination.

II. *SOMETIMES we may make uſe of ſenſible things and corporeal images for the illuſtration of thoſe notions which are more abſtracted and intellectual.* Therefore *diagrams* greatly aſſiſt the mind in *aſtronomy* and *philoſophy*; and the *emblems* of virtues and vices may happily teach children, and pleaſingly impreſs thoſe uſeful *moral* ideas on young minds, which perhaps might be conveyed to them with much more difficulty by mere *moral* and *abſtracted diſcourſes*.

I confeſs in this practice of repreſenting *moral* ſubjects by pictures, we ſhould be cautious leſt we ſo far immerſe the mind in corporeal images, as to render it unfit to take in an abſtracted and intellectual idea, or cauſe it to form wrong conceptions of immaterial things. This practice therefore is rather to be uſed at firſt in order to get a fixed habit of attention, and in ſome caſes only; but it can never be our conſtant way and method of purſuing all moral, abſtracted, and ſpiritual themes.

III. *APPLY yourſelf to thoſe ſtudies, and read thoſe authors who draw out their ſubjects into a perpetual chain of connected reaſonings*, wherein the following parts of the diſcourſe are naturally and eaſily derived from thoſe which go before. Several of the *mathematical ſciences*,

if not all, are happily useful for this purpose. This will render the labour of study delightful to a rational mind, and will fix the powers of the understanding with strong *attention* to their proper operations by the very pleasure of it. *Labor ipse voluptas*, is a happy proposition whereſoever it can be applied.

IV. *DO not choose your constant place of study by the finery of the prospects, or the most various and entertaining scenes of sensible things.* Too much light, or a variety of objects which strike the eye or the ear, especially while they are ever in motion or often changing, have a natural and powerful tendency to steal away the mind too often from its steady pursuit of any subject which we contemplate; and thereby the soul gets a habit of silly curiosity and impertinence, of trifling and wandering. *Vagario* thought himself furnished with the best closet for his study among the beauties, gaieties, and diversions of *Kensington* or *Hampton-Court*; but after seven years professing to pursue learning, he was a mere novice still.

V. *BE not in too much haste to come to the determination of a difficult or important point.* Think it worth your waiting to find out truth. Do not give your assent up to either side of a question too soon, merely on this account, that the study of it is long and difficult. Rather be contented with ignorance for a season, and continue in suspence till your attention, and meditation, and due labour, have found out sufficient evidence on one side. Some are so fond to know a great deal at once, and love to talk of things with freedom and boldness before they thoroughly understand them, that they scarcely ever allow themselves *attention* enough to search the matter through and through.

VI. *HAVE a care of indulging the more sensual passions and appetites of animal nature; they are great enemies to attention.* Let not the mind of a student be under the influence of any warm affection to things of sense, when he comes to engage in the search of truth, or the improvement of his understanding. A person under

the power of love, or fear, or anger, great pain, or deep ſorrow, hath ſo little government of his ſoul, that he cannot keep it attentive to the proper ſubject of his *meditation*. The paſſions call away the thoughts with inceſſant importunity towards the object that excited them; and if we indulge the frequent riſe and roving of paſſions, we ſhall thereby procure an unſteady and inattentive habit of mind.

Yet this one exception muſt be admitted, *viz.* If we can be ſo happy as to engage any paſſion of the ſoul on the ſide of the particular ſtudy which we are purſuing, it may have a great influence to fix the attention more ſtrongly to it.

VII. It is therefore very uſeful to fix and engage the mind in the purſuit of any ſtudy, by a *conſideration of the divine pleaſures of truth and knowledge*, by a *ſenſe of our duty to God*, by a *delight in the exerciſe of our intellectual faculties*, by the *hope of future ſervice* to our fellow-creatures, and *glorious advantage to ourſelves*, both in this world and that which is to come. Theſe thoughts, though they may move our affections, yet they do it with a proper influence: theſe will rather aſſiſt and promote our *attention*, than diſturb or divert it from the ſubject of our preſent and proper meditations. A ſoul inſpired with the fondeſt love of truth, and the warmeſt aſpirations after ſincere felicity and celeſtial beatitude, will keep all its powers attentive to the inceſſant purſuit of them: paſſion is then refined, and conſecrated to its divineſt purpoſes.

CHAP. XVI.

Of enlarging the Capacity of the Mind.

THERE are three things which in an eſpecial manner go to make up that *amplitude* or *capacity of mind*, which is one of the nobleſt characters belonging to the underſtanding: (1.) *When the mind is ready to take in great and ſublime ideas without pain or difficulty.*

(2.) *When the mind is free to receive new and ſtrange ideas, upon juſt evidence, without great ſurpriſe or averſion.* (3.) *When the mind is able to conceive or ſurvey many ideas at once without confuſion, and to form a true judgment derived from that extenſive ſurvey.* The perſon who wants either of theſe characters may in that reſpect be ſaid to have a *narrow genius.* Let us diffuſe our meditations a little upon this ſubject.

I. THAT is an ample and capacious mind which is *ready to take in vaſt and ſublime ideas without pain or difficulty.* Perſons who have never been uſed to converſe with any thing but the common, little, and obvious affairs of life, have acquired a narrow or contracted habit of ſoul, that they are not able to ſtretch their intellects wide enough to admit large and noble thoughts; they are ready to make their domeſtic, daily, and familiar images of things, the meaſure of *all that is,* and *all that can be.*

Talk to them of the vaſt dimenſions of the *planetary worlds;* tell them that the ſtar called *Jupiter* is a ſolid globe, two hundred and twenty times bigger than our earth; that the *ſun* is a vaſt globe of fire above a thouſand times bigger than *Jupiter;* that is, two hundred and twenty thouſand times bigger than the earth; that the *diſtance from the earth to the ſun* is eighty-one millions of miles; and that a cannon-bullet ſhot from the earth would not arrive at the *neareſt of the fixed ſtars* in ſome hundreds of years; they cannot bear the belief of it, but hear all theſe glorious labours of *aſtronomy* as a mere idle romance.

Inform them of the *amazing ſwiftneſs* of the motion of ſome of the ſmalleſt or the biggeſt bodies in nature; aſſure them, according to the beſt philoſophy, that the planet *Venus* (*i. e.* our *morning* or *evening ſtar,* which is near as big as our earth), though it ſeems to move from its place but a few yards in a month, does really fly ſeventy thouſand miles in a hour; tell them that the *rays of light* ſhoot from the ſun to our earth at the rate of one hundred and eighty thouſand miles in the ſecond of a minute; they ſtand aghaſt at

ſuch ſort of talk, and believe it no more than the tales of *giants fifty yards high*, and the *rabbinical fables of leviathan*, who every day ſwallows a fiſh of three miles long, and is thus preparing himſelf to be the food and entertainment of the bleſſed at the feaſt of Paradiſe.

Theſe unenlarged ſouls are in the ſame manner diſguſted with the wonders which the *microſcope* has diſcovered concerning the *ſhape*, the *limbs*, and *motions* of *ten thouſand little animals*, whoſe united bulk would not equal a pepper-corn: they are ready to give the lie to all the improvements of our ſenſes by the invention of a variety of glaſſes, and will ſcarcely believe any thing beyond the teſtimony of their naked eye without the aſſiſtance of art.

Now if we would attempt in a learned manner to relieve the minds that labour under this defect,

(1.) It is uſeful to begin with ſome *firſt principles of geometry*, and lead them onward by degrees to the doctrine of quantities which are *incommenſurable*, or which will admit of no common meaſure, though it be never ſo ſmall. By this means they will ſee the neceſſity of admitting the *infinite diviſibility of quantity* or *matter*.

This ſame doctrine may alſo be proved to their underſtandings, and almoſt to their ſenſes, by ſome eaſier arguments in a more obvious manner. As the very opening and cloſing of a pair of *compaſſes* will evidently prove, that if the ſmalleſt ſuppoſed part of matter or quantity be put between the points, there will be ſtill leſs and leſs diſtances or quantities all the way between the legs, till you come to the head or joint; wherefore there is no ſuch thing poſſible as the ſmalleſt quantity. But a little acquaintance with true philoſophy and mathematical learning would ſoon teach them, that there are no limits either as to the *extenſion of ſpace*, or to the *diviſion of body*, and would lead them to believe there are bodies amazingly great or ſmall beyond their preſent imagination.

(2.) It is proper alſo to acquaint them with the *circumference of our earth*, which may be proved by very eaſy principles of *geometry*, *geography*, and *aſtronomy*,

to be about twenty-four thouſand miles round, as it has been actually found to have this dimenſion by mariners who have ſailed round it. Then let them be taught, that in every twenty-four hours either the *ſun* and *ſtars* muſt all move round this earth, or the *earth* muſt turn round upon its own axis. If the *earth* itſelf revolve thus, then each houſe or mountain near the equator muſt move at the rate of a thouſand miles in an hour: but if (as they generally ſuppoſe) the *ſun* or *ſtars* move round the earth, then (the circumference of their ſeveral orbits or ſpheres being vaſtly greater than this earth) they muſt have a motion prodigiouſly ſwifter than a thouſand miles an hour. Such a thought as this will by degrees enlarge their minds, and they will be taught, even upon their own principle of *the diurnal revolutions of the heavens*, to take in ſome of the vaſt dimenſions of the heavenly bodies, their ſpaces and motions.

(3.) To this ſhould be added the *uſe of teleſcopes*, to help them to ſee the diſtant wonders in the ſkies; and *microſcopes*, which diſcover the minuteſt parts of little animals, and reveal ſome of the finer and moſt curious works of nature. They ſhould be acquainted alſo with ſome other noble *inventions of modern philoſophy*, which have a great influence to enlarge the human underſtanding, of which I ſhall take occaſion to ſpeak more under the next head.

(4.) For the ſame purpoſe they may be invited to read thoſe parts of *Milton's* admirable poem, entitled *Paradiſe Loſt*, where he deſcribes the armies and powers of angels, the wars and the ſenate of devils, the creation of this earth, together with the deſcriptions of heaven, hell, and paradiſe.

It muſt be granted that poeſy often deals in theſe vaſt and ſublime ideas. And even if the ſubject or matter of the poem doth not require ſuch amazing and extenſive thoughts, yet tropes and figures, which are ſome of the main powers and beauties of poeſy, do ſo glorioufly exalt the matter, as to give a ſublime imagination its proper reliſh and delight.

So when a boar is chafed in hunting,

His noſtrils flames expire,
And his red eye-balls roll with living fire. Dryden.

When *Ulyſſes* with-holds and ſuppreſſes his reſentment,

His wrath compreſt
Recoiling, mutter'd thunder in his breaſt. Pope.

But eſpecially where the ſubject is grand, the poet fails not to repreſent it in all its grandeur.

So when the ſupremacy of a God is deſcribed,

He ſees with equal eye, as God of all,
A hero periſh, or a ſparrow fall:
Atoms or ſyſtems, into ruin hurl'd,
And now a bubble burſt, and now a world. Pope.

Theſe ſorts of writing have a natural tendency to enlarge the capacity of the mind, and make ſublime ideas familiar to it. And inſtead of running always to the ancient *Heathen poeſy* with this deſign, we may with equal, if not ſuperior advantage, apply ourſelves to converſe with ſome of the beſt of our modern poets, as well as with the writings of the prophets, and the *poetical* parts of the Bible, *viz.* the book of *Job* and the *Pſalms*, in which ſacred authors we ſhall find ſometimes more ſublime ideas, more glorious deſcriptions, more elevated language, than the fondeſt critics have ever found in any of the *Heathen* verſifiers either of *Greece* or *Rome*; for the *Eaſtern* writers uſe and allow much ſtronger figures and tropes than the *Weſtern*.

Now there are many, and great, and ſacred *advantages* to be derived from this ſort of *enlargement of the mind.*

It will lead us into more exalted apprehenſions *of the great God our Creator* than ever we had before. It will entertain our thoughts with holy wonder and amazement, while we contemplate that Being who

created these various works of surprising greatness, and surprising smallness; who has displayed most inconceivable *wisdom* in the contrivance of all the parts, powers, and motions of these little animals, invisible to the naked eye; who has manifested a most divine extent of *knowledge, power, and greatness*, in forming, moving, and managing the most extensive bulk of the heavenly bodies, and in surveying and comprehending all those unmeasurable spaces in which they move. *Fancy*, with all her images, is fatigued and overwhelmed in following the *planetary worlds* through such immense stages, such astonishing journeys as these are, and resigns its place to the *pure intellect*, which learns by degrees to take in such ideas as these, and to adore its Creator with new and sublime devotion.

And not only are we taught to form juster ideas of the *great God* by these methods, but this enlargement of the mind carries us on to nobler conceptions of his *intelligent creatures*. The mind that deals only in vulgar and common ideas is ready to imagine the *nature and powers of man* to come something too near to *God his Maker*, because we do not see or sensibly converse with any beings superior to ourselves. But when the soul has obtained a greater *amplitude of thought*, it will not then immediately pronounce every thing to be God which is above man. It then learns to suppose there may be as many various ranks of beings in the invisible world, in a constant gradation superior to us, as we ourselves are superior to all the ranks of being beneath us in this visible world; even though we descend downward far below the *ant* and the *worm*, the *snail* and the *oyster*, to the least and to the dullest animated atoms which are discovered to us by *microscopes*.

By this means we shall be able to suppose what prodigious power *angels*, whether good or bad, must be furnished with, and prodigious knowledge in order to oversee the realms of *Persia* and *Græcia* of old, or if any such superintend the affairs of *Great Britain, France, Ireland, Germany*, &c. in our days: What power and speed is necessary to destroy one hundred

eighty-five thouſand armed men in one night in the *Aſſyrian* camp of *Sennacherib*, and all the firſt-born in the land of *Egypt* in another, both which are attributed to an angel.

By theſe ſteps we ſhall aſcend to form more juſt ideas of the knowledge and grandeur, the power and glory, of the *Man Jeſus Chriſt*, who is intimately united to God, and is one with him. Doubtleſs he is furniſhed with ſuperior powers to all the angels in heaven, becauſe he is employed in ſuperior work, and appointed to be the Sovereign Lord of all the viſible and inviſible worlds. It is his human nature, in which the *Godhead dwells bodily*, that is advanced to theſe honours, and to this empire; and perhaps there is little or nothing in the government of the kingdoms of nature, and grace, but what is tranſacted by the *Man Jeſus*, inhabited by the *divine power and wiſdom*, and employed as a medium or conſcious inſtrument of this extenſive gubernation.

II. I PROCEED now to conſider the next thing wherein the *capacity* or *amplitude of the mind* conſiſts, and that is, when the mind is *free to receive new and ſtrange ideas and propoſitions upon juſt evidence without any great ſurpriſe or averſion*. Thoſe who confine themſelves within the circle of their own hereditary ideas and opinions, and who never give themſelves leave ſo much as to examine or believe any thing beſide the dictates of their own family, or ſect, or party, are juſtly charged with a *narrowneſs of ſoul*. Let us ſurvey ſome inſtances of this imperfection, and then direct to the cure of it.

(1.) Perſons who have been bred up all their days within the ſmoke of their father's chimney, or within the limits of their native town or village, are ſurpriſed at every new ſight that apears, when they travel a few miles from home. The *plowman* ſtands amazed at the ſhops, the trade, the crowds of people, the magnificent buildings, the pomp, and riches, and equipage of the court and city, and would hardly believe what was told him before he ſaw it. On the other hand, the *cockney*, travelling into the country, is ſurpriſed at many

actions of the quadruped and winged animals in the field, and at many common practices of rural affairs.

If either of these happen to hear an account of the familiar and daily customs of foreign countries, they pronounce them at once indecent and ridiculous; so *narrow* are their understandings, and their thoughts so confined, that they know not how to believe any thing *wise* or *proper*, besides what they have been taught to practise.

This *narrowness of mind* should be cured by *hearing and reading the accounts of different parts of the world, and the histories of past ages, and of nations and countries distant from our own*, especially the more polite parts of mankind. Nothing tends in this respect so much to enlarge the mind as travelling, *i. e.* making a visit to other towns, cities, or countries, besides those in which we were born and educated: and where our condition of life does not grant us this privilege, we must endeavour to supply the want of it by books.

(2.) It is the same *narrowness of mind* that awakens the surprise and aversion of some persons, when they hear of *doctrines and schemes in human affairs, or in religion*, quite different from what they have embraced. Perhaps they have been trained up from their infancy in one set of notions, and their thoughts have been confined to one single tract both in the civil or religious life, without ever hearing or knowing what other opinions are current among mankind: or at least they have seen all other notions besides their own represented in a false and malignant light, whereupon they judge and condemn at once every sentiment but what their own party receives, and they think it a piece of justice and truth to lay heavy censures upon the practice of every different sect in *Christianity* or *politics*. They have so rooted themselves in the opinions of their party, that they cannot hear an *objection* with patience, nor can they bear a *vindication*, or so much as an *apology*, for any set of principles beside their own: all the rest is *nonsense* or *heresy*, *folly* or *blasphemy*.

This defect alſo is to be relieved by *free converſation with perſons of different ſentiments*; this will teach us to bear with patience a defence of opinions contrary to our own. If we are ſcholars, we ſhould alſo read the objections againſt our own tenets, and view the principles of other parties, as they are repreſented in their own authors, and not merely in the citations of thoſe who would confute them. We ſhould take an honeſt and unbiaſſed ſurvey of the force of reaſoning on all ſides, and bring all to the teſt of unprejudiced reaſon and divine revelation. *Note*, this is not to be done in a raſh and ſelf-ſufficient manner; but with a humble dependence on divine wiſdom and grace, while we walk among ſnares and dangers.

By ſuch a free converſe with perſons of different ſects (eſpecially thoſe who differ only in particular forms of Chriſtianity, but agree in the *great and neceſſary doctrines* of it), we ſhall find that there are perſons of good ſenſe and virtue, perſons of piety and worth, perſons of much candour and goodneſs, who belong to different parties, and have imbibed ſentiments oppoſite to each other. This will ſoften the roughneſs of an unpoliſhed ſoul, and enlarge the avenues of our charity toward others, and incline us to receive them into all the degrees of unity and affection which the word of God requires.

(3.) I might borrow further illuſtrations both of this *freedom* and this *averſion to receive new truths*, from modern *aſtronomy* and *natural philoſophy*. How much is the vulgar part of the world ſurpriſed at the talk of the *diurnal and annual revolutions of the earth?* They have ever been taught by their ſenſes and their neighbours to imagine the *earth* ſtands fixed in the centre of the univerſe, and that the *ſun*, with all the *planets* and the *fixed ſtars*, are whirled round this little globe once in twenty-four hours; not conſidering that ſuch a diurnal motion, by reaſon of the diſtance of ſome of thoſe heavenly bodies, muſt be almoſt infinitely ſwifter and more inconceivable than any which the modern aſtronomers attribute to them. Tell theſe perſons that

the *ſun* is fixed in the centre, that the *earth* with all the *planets* roll round the ſun in their ſeveral periods, and that the *moon* rolls round the earth in a leſſer circle, while together with the earth ſhe is carried round the ſun; they cannot admit a ſyllable of this new and ſtrange doctrine, and they pronounce it utterly contrary to all ſenſe and reaſon.

Acquaint them that there are *four moons* alſo perpetually rolling round the planet *Jupiter*, and carried along with him in his periodical circuit round the ſun, which little moons were never known till the year 1610, when *Galileo* diſcovered them by his teleſcope; inform them that *Saturn* has five moons of the ſame kind attending him; and that the *body of that planet* is encompaſſed with a broad flat circular ring, diſtant from the planet twenty-one thouſand miles, and twenty-one thouſand miles broad, they look upon theſe things as tales and fancies, and will tell you that the glaſſes do but delude your eyes with vain images; and even when they themſelves conſult their own eye-ſight in the uſe of theſe tubes, the *narrowneſs of their mind* is ſuch, that they will ſcarcely believe their ſenſes when they dictate ideas ſo new and ſtrange.

And if you proceed further, and attempt to lead them into a belief that all theſe *planetary worlds are habitable*, and it is probable they are repleniſhed with intellectual beings dwelling in bodies, they will deride the folly of him that informs them; for they reſolve to believe there are no habitable worlds but this *earth*, and no ſpirits dwelling in bodies beſides *mankind*; and it is well if they do not fix the brand of *hereſy* on the man who is leading them out of their long impriſonment, and looſing the fetters of their ſouls.

There are many other things relating to *mechanical experiments*, and to the properties of the air, water, fire, iron, the loadſtone, and other minerals and metals, as well as the doctrine of the ſenſible qualities, *viz.* colours, ſounds, taſtes, *&c.* which this rank of men cannot believe for want of a greater *amplitude of mind*.

The beſt way to convince them is by giving them ſome acquaintance with the *various experiments* in philoſophy, and proving by *ocular demonſtration* the multiform and amazing operations of the *air-pump*, the *loadſtone*, the *chemical furnace*, *optical glaſſes*, and *mechanical engines*. By this means the underſtanding will ſtretch itſelf by degrees, and when they have found there are ſo many new and ſtrange things that are moſt evidently true, they will not be ſo forward to condemn every new propoſition in any of the other ſciences, or in the affairs of religion or civil life.

III. THE *capacity of the underſtanding* includes yet another qualification in it, and that is an *ability to receive many ideas at once without confuſion*. The ample mind takes a ſurvey of ſeveral objects with one glance, keeps them all within ſight and preſent to the ſoul, that they may be compared together in their mutual reſpects; it forms juſt judgments, and it draws proper inferences from this compariſon even to a great length of argument, and a chain of demonſtrations.

The *narrowneſs* that belongs to human ſouls in general, is a great imperfection and impediment to wiſdom and happineſs. There are but few perſons who can contemplate, or practiſe ſeveral things at once; our faculties are very limited, and while we are intent upon one part or property of a ſubject, we have but a ſlight glimpſe of the reſt, or we loſe it out of ſight. But it is a ſign of a *large and capacious mind*, if we can with one ſingle view take in a variety of objects; or at leaſt when the mind can apply itſelf to ſeveral objects with ſo ſwift a ſucceſſion, and in ſo few moments, as attains almoſt the ſame ends as if it were all done in the ſame inſtant.

This is a neceſſary qualification in order to great *knowledge* and *good judgment*: for there are ſeveral things in human life, in religion, and in the ſciences, which have various circumſtances, appendices, and relations attending them; and without a ſurvey of all thoſe ideas which ſtand in connexion with and relation to each other, we are often in danger of paſſing a falſe

judgment on the ſubject propoſed. It is for this reaſon there are ſo numerous controverſies found among the learned and unlearned world, in matters of *religion* as well as in the affairs of *civil government*. The notions of *ſin and duty to God and our fellow-creatures; of law, juſtice, authority, and power; of covenant, faith, juſtification, redemption, and grace; of church, biſhop, preſbyter, ordination*, &c. contain in them ſuch complicated ideas, that when we are to judge of any thing concerning them, it is hard to take into our view at once all the attendants or conſequents that muſt and will be concerned in the determination of a ſingle queſtion: and yet without a due attention to many, or moſt of theſe, we are in danger of determining that queſtion amiſs.

It is owing to the narrowneſs of our minds that we are expoſed to the ſame peril in the *matters of human duty and prudence*. In many things which we do, we ought not only to conſider the *mere naked action* itſelf, but the perſons *who act*, the perſons *toward whom*, the time *when*, the place *where*, the manner *how*, the end *for which* the action is done, together with the effects that *muſt* or that *may follow*, and all other ſurrounding circumſtances: theſe things muſt neceſſarily be taken into our view, in order to determine whether the action, which is indifferent in itſelf, be either lawful or unlawful, good or evil, wiſe or fooliſh, decent or indecent, proper or improper, as it is ſo circumſtantiated.

Let me give a plain inſtance for the illuſtration of this matter. *Mario* kills a dog, which, conſidered merely in itſelf, ſeems to be an indifferent action: now the dog was *Timon*'s, and not his own; this makes it look unlawful. But *Timon* bid him do it; this gives it an appearance of lawfulneſs again. It was done at church, and in time of divine ſervice; theſe circumſtances added, caſt on it an air of irreligion. But the dog flew at *Mario*, and put him in danger of his life; this relieves the ſeeming impiety of the action. Yet *Mario* might have eſcaped by flying thence; therefore the action appears to be improper. But the dog was

known to be mad; this further circumſtance makes it almoſt neceſſary that the dog ſhould be ſlain, leſt he might worry the aſſembly, and do much miſchief. Yet again, *Mario* killed him with a piſtol, which he happened to have in his pocket ſince yeſterday's journey, now hereby the whole congregation was terrified and diſcompoſed, and divine ſervice was broken off; this carries an appearance of great indecency and impropriety in it: but after all, when we conſider a further circumſtance, that *Mario* being thus violently aſſaulted by a mad dog, had no way of eſcape, and had no other weapon about him, it ſeems to take away all the colours of impropriety, indecency, or unlawfulneſs, and to allow that the preſervation of one or many lives will juſtify the act as wiſe and good. Now all theſe concurrent appendices of the action ought to be ſurveyed, in order to pronounce with juſtice and truth concerning it.

There are a multitude of human actions in private life, in domeſtic affairs, in traffic, in civil government, in courts of juſtice, in ſchools of learning, *&c.* which have ſo many complicated circumſtances, aſpects, and ſituations, with regard to time and place, perſons and things, that it is impoſſible for any one to paſs a right judgment concerning them, without entering into moſt of theſe circumſtances, and ſurveying them extenſively, and comparing and balancing them all aright.

Whence by the way, I may take occaſion to ſay, How many thouſands are there who take upon them to paſs their cenſures on the perſonal and the domeſtic actions of others, who pronounce boldly on the affairs of the public, and determine the juſtice or madneſs, the wiſdom or folly of national adminiſtrations, of peace and war, *&c.* whom neither God nor men ever qualified for ſuch a poſt of judgment? They were not capable of entering into the numerous concurring ſprings of action, nor had they ever taken a ſurvey of the twentieth part of the circumſtances which were neceſſary for ſuch judgments or cenſures.

It is the *narrowneſs of our minds*, as well as the vices of the will, that oftentimes prevents us from taking a full view of all the complicated and concurring appendices that belong to human actions: thence it comes to paſs that there is ſo little right judgment, ſo little juſtice, prudence, or decency, practiſed among the bulk of mankind; thence ariſe infinite reproaches and cenſures, alike fooliſh and unrighteous. You ſee therefore how needful and happy a thing it is to be poſſeſt of ſome meaſure of this *amplitude of ſoul*, in order to make us very wiſe, or knowing, or juſt, or prudent, or happy.

I confeſs this ſort of *amplitude or capacity of mind* is in a great meaſure the gift of nature, for ſome are born with much more capacious ſouls than others.

The genius of *ſome perſons* is ſo poor and limited, that they can hardly take in the connexion of two or three propoſitions unleſs it be in matters of ſenſe, and which they have learnt by experience: they are utterly *unfit for ſpeculative ſtudies*; it is hard for them to diſcern the difference betwixt *right* and *wrong* in matters of reaſon, on any abſtracted ſubjects; theſe ought never to ſet up for *ſcholars*, but apply themſelves to thoſe arts and profeſſions of life which are to be learnt at an eaſier rate, by ſlow degrees, and daily experience.

Others have a ſoul a little more capacious, and they can take in the connexion of a few propoſitions pretty well; but if the chain of conſequences be a little prolix, here they ſtick and are confounded. If perſons of this *make* ever devote themſelves to *ſcience*, they ſhould be well aſſured of a ſolid and ſtrong conſtitution of body, and well reſolved to bear the fatigue of hard labour and diligence in ſtudy: *if the iron be blunt*, king *Solomon* tells us *we muſt put more ſtrength*.

But, in the *third place*, there are *ſome* of ſo bright and happy a genius, and ſo ample a mind, that they can take in a long train of propoſitions, if not at once, yet in a very few moments, and judge well concerning the dependence of them. They can ſurvey a variety of complicated ideas without fatigue or diſturbance;

and a number of truths offering themſelves as it were in one view to their underſtanding, doth not perplex or confound them. This makes a great man.

Now though there may be much owing to nature in this caſe, yet experience aſſures us, that even a lower degree of this capacity and extent of thought may be increaſed by diligence and application, by frequent exerciſe, and the obſervation of ſuch *rules* as theſe.

I. *LABOUR by all means to gain an attentive and patient temper of mind*, a power of confining and fixing your thoughts ſo long on any one appointed ſubject, till you have ſurveyed it on every ſide, and in every ſituation, and run through the ſeveral powers, parts, properties, and relations, effects, and conſequences of it. He whoſe thoughts are very fluttering and wandering, and cannot be fixed attentively to a few ideas ſucceſſively, will never be able to ſurvey many and various objects diſtinctly at once, but will certainly be overwhelmed and confounded with the multiplicity of them. The rules for *fixing the attention* in the former chapter are proper to be conſulted here.

II. *ACCUSTOM yourſelf to clear and diſtinct ideas in every thing you think of.* Be not ſatisfied with obſcure and confuſed conceptions of things, eſpecially where clearer may be obtained; for one obſcure or confuſed idea, eſpecially if it be of great importance in the queſtion, intermingled with many clear ones, and placed in its variety of aſpects towards them, will be in danger of ſpreading confuſion over the whole ſcene of ideas, and thus may have an unhappy influence to overwhelm the underſtanding with darkneſs, and pervert the judgment. A little black paint will ſhamefully tincture and ſpoil twenty gay colours.

Conſider yet further, that if you content yourſelf frequently with *words inſtead of ideas*, or with *cloudy and confuſed notions* of things, how impenetrable will that darkneſs be, and how vaſt and endleſs that confuſion which muſt ſurround and involve the underſtanding, when many of theſe obſcure and confuſed ideas come to be ſet before the ſoul at once? and how impoſſible

will it be to form a clear and juſt judgment about them.

III. Use all diligence to *acquire* and *treaſure up a large ſtore of ideas* and notions: take every opportunity to add ſomething to your ſtock; and by frequent recollection fix them in your memory: nothing tends to confirm and enlarge the memory like a frequent review of its poſſeſſions. Then the brain being well furniſhed with various traces, ſignatures, and images, will have a rich treaſure always ready to be propoſed or offered to the ſoul, when it directs its thought towards any particular ſubject. This will gradually give the mind a faculty of ſurveying many objects at once; as a *room* that is richly adorned and hung round with a *great variety of pictures*, ſtrikes the eye almoſt at once with all that variety, eſpecially if they have been well ſurveyed one by one at firſt: this makes it habitual and more eaſy to the inhabitants to take in many of thoſe painted ſcenes with a ſingle glance or two.

Here *note*, that by acquiring a rich *treaſure of notions*, I do not mean only *ſingle ideas*, but alſo *propoſitions*, *obſervations*, and *experiences*, with *reaſonings* and *arguments* upon the various ſubjects that occur among natural or moral, common or ſacred *affairs*; that when you are called to judge concerning any queſtion, you will have ſome principles of truth, ſome uſeful axioms and obſervations always ready at hand to direct and aſſiſt your judgment.

IV. It is neceſſary that we ſhould as far as poſſible *entertain and lay up our daily new ideas, in a regular order*, and range the acquiſitions of our ſouls under proper heads, whether of *divinity*, *law*, *phyſics*, *mathematics*, *morality*, *politics*, *trade*, *domeſtic life*, *civility*, *decency*, &c. whether of *cauſe*, *effect*, *ſubſtance*, *mode*, *power*, *property*, *body*, *ſpirit*, &c. We ſhould inure our minds to method and order continually; and when we take in any freſh ideas, occurrences, and obſervations, we ſhould diſpoſe of them in their proper places, and ſee how they ſtand and agree with the reſt of our notions on the ſame ſubject: as a *ſcholar* would diſpoſe

of a *new book* on a proper ſhelf among its kindred authors; or as an *officer* at the poſt-houſe in *London* diſpoſes of every *letter* he takes in, placing it in the box that belongs to the proper road or county.

In any of theſe caſes if things lay *all in a heap*, the addition of any new object would increaſe the confuſion; but *method* gives a ſpeedy and ſhort ſurvey of them with eaſe and pleaſure. *Method* is of admirable advantage to keep our ideas from a confuſed mixture, and to preſerve them ready for every uſe. The ſcience of *ontology*, which diſtributes all *beings*, and all the *affections of being*, whether *abſolute* or *relative*, under *proper claſſes*, is of good ſervice to keep our intellectual acquiſitions in ſuch order as that the mind may ſurvey them at once.

V. As *method* is neceſſary for the improvement of the mind, in order to make your treaſure of ideas moſt uſeful; ſo in all your *further purſuits of truth, and acquirement of rational knowledge, obſerve a regular progreſſive method. Begin with the moſt ſimple, eaſy, and obvious ideas; then by degrees join two, and three, and more of them together:* thus the complicated ideas growing up under your eye and obſervation, will not give the ſame confuſion of thought as they would do if they were all offered to the mind at once, without your obſerving the original and formation of them. An eminent example of this appears in the ſtudy of *arithmetic*. If a ſcholar juſt admitted into the ſchool obſerves his maſter performing an operation in the *rule of diviſion*, his head is at once diſturbed and confounded with the manifold compariſons of the numbers of the *diviſor* and *dividend*, and the multiplication of the one and ſubtraction of it from the other: but if he begin regularly at *addition*, and ſo proceed by *ſubtraction* and *multiplication*, he will then in a few weeks be able to take in an intelligent ſurvey of all thoſe operations in *diviſion*, and to practiſe them himſelf with eaſe and pleaſure, each of which at firſt ſeemed all intricacy and confuſion.

An illuſtration of the like nature may be borrowed from *geometry* and *algebra*, and other mathematical prac-

tices: How eaſily does an *expert geometrician* with one glance of his eye take in a complicated diagram made up of many *lines and circles, angles and arches?* How readily does he judge of it, whether the demonſtration deſigned by it be true or falſe? It was by degrees he arrived at this ſtretch of underſtanding; he began with a *ſingle line* or a *point*; he joined *two lines* in an *angle*; he advanced to *triangles* and *ſquares, polygons* and *circles*; thus the powers of his underſtanding were ſtretched and augmented daily, till by diligence and regular application he acquired this extenſive faculty of mind.

But this advantage does not belong only to *mathematical learning*. If we apply ourſelves at firſt in any ſcience to clear and ſingle ideas, and never hurry ourſelves on to the following and more complicated parts of knowledge till we thoroughly underſtand the foregoing, we may practiſe the ſame method of *enlarging the capacity of the ſoul* with ſucceſs in any one of the ſciences, or in the affairs of life and religion.

Beginning with *A, B, C*, and making *ſyllables* out of *letters*, and *words* out of *ſyllables*, has been the foundation of all that glorious ſuperſtructure of *arts* and *ſciences*, which have enriched the minds and libraries of the learned world in ſeveral ages. Theſe are the firſt ſteps by which the ample and capacious ſouls among mankind have arrived at that prodigious extent of knowledge, which renders them the wonder and glory of the nation where they live. Though *Plato* and *Cicero*, *Deſcartes* and Mr. *Boyle*, Mr. *Locke* and Sir *Iſaac Newton*, were doubtleſs favoured by nature with a genius of uncommon amplitude; yet in their early years and firſt attemps of ſcience, this was but limited and narrow in compariſon of what they attained at laſt. But how vaſt and capacious were thoſe powers which they afterwards acquired by patient *attention* and watchful *obſervation*, by the purſuit of *clear ideas* and a *regular method* of thinking!

VI. ANOTHER means of acquiring this amplitude and capacity of mind, is a *peruſal of difficult entangled queſtions, and of the ſolution of them in any ſcience. Specu-*

lative and *caſuiſtical divinity* will furniſh us with many ſuch caſes and controverſies. There are ſome ſuch difficulties in reconciling ſeveral parts of the Epiſtles of St. *Paul*, relating to the *Jewiſh* law and the *Chriſtian* goſpel; a happy ſolution whereof will require ſuch an extenſive view of things, and the reading of theſe happy ſolutions will enlarge this faculty in younger ſtudents. In *morals* and *political* ſubjects, *Puffendorf's Law of Nature and Nations*, and ſeveral determinations therein, will promote the ſame amplitude of mind. An attendance on public trials and arguments in the *civil* courts of juſtice, will be of good advantage for this purpoſe; and after a man has ſtudied the general principles of the law of nature and the laws of *England* in proper books, the reading the *reports of adjudged caſes*, collected by men of great ſagacity and judgment, will richly improve his mind toward acquiring this deſirable amplitude and extent of thought, and more eſpecially in perſons of that profeſſion.

CHAP. XVII.

Of improving the MEMORY.

MEMORY is a diſtinct faculty of the mind of man, very different from perception, judgment, and reaſoning, and its other powers. Then we are ſaid to *remember* any thing, *when the idea of it ariſes in the mind with a conſciouſneſs at the ſame time that we have had this idea before.* Our memory is our natural power of retaining what we learn, and of recalling it on every occaſion. Therefore we can never be ſaid to *remember* any thing, whether it be ideas or propoſitions, words or things, notions or arguments, of which we have not had ſome former idea or perception, either by *ſenſe or imagination, thought or reflection*; but whatſoever we learn from obſervation, books, or converſation, *&c.* it muſt all be laid up and preſerved in the memory, if we would make it really uſeful.

So neceſſary and ſo excellent a faculty is the *memory* of man, that all other abilities of the mind borrow from hence their beauty and perfection; for other capacities of the ſoul are almoſt uſeleſs without this. To what purpoſe are all our labours in knowledge and wiſdom, if we want memory to preſerve and uſe what we have acquired? What ſignify all other intellectual or ſpiritual improvements, if they are loſt as ſoon as they are obtained? It is memory alone that enriches the mind, by preſerving what our labour and induſtry daily collect. In a word, there can be neither knowledge, nor arts, nor ſciences, without memory; nor can there be any improvement of mankind in virtue or morals, or the practice of religion, without the aſſiſtance and influence of this power. Without memory the ſoul of man would be but a poor, deſtitute, naked being, with an everlaſting blank ſpread over it, except the fleeting ideas of the preſent moment.

Memory is very uſeful to thoſe *who ſpeak*, as well as to thoſe *who learn*. It aſſiſts the *teacher* and the *orator*, as well as the ſcholar or the hearer. The beſt ſpeeches and inſtructions are almoſt loſt, if thoſe who hear them immediately forget them. And thoſe who are called to ſpeak in public are much better heard and accepted, when they can deliver their diſcourſe by the help of a lively genius and a ready memory, than when they are forced to read all that they would communicate to their hearers. Reading is certainly a heavier way of the conveyance of our ſentiments; and there are very few mere readers who have the felicity of penetrating the ſoul, and awakening the paſſions of thoſe who hear, by ſuch a grace and power of oratory, as the man who ſeems to talk every word from his very heart, and pours out the riches of his own knowledge upon the people round about him by the help of a free and copious memory. This gives life and ſpirit to every thing that is ſpoken, and has a natural tendency to make a deeper impreſſion on the minds of men: it awakens the dulleſt ſpirits, cauſes them to receive a diſcourſe with more affection and pleaſure, and adds a

ſingular grace and excellency both to the perſon and his oration.

A *good judgment* and a *good memory* are very different qualifications. A perſon may have a very ſtrong, capacious, and retentive memory, where the judgment is very poor and weak; as ſometimes it happens in thoſe who are but one degree above an idiot, who have manifeſted an amazing ſtrength and extent of memory, but have hardly been able to join or disjoin two *or three* ideas in a wiſe and happy manner, to make a ſolid rational propoſition.

There have been inſtances of others who have had but a very tolerable power of *memory*, yet their *judgment* has been of a much ſuperior degree, juſt and wiſe, ſolid and excellent.

Yet it muſt be acknowledged, that where a happy memory is found in any perſon, there is one good foundation laid for a wiſe and juſt judgment of things, whereſoever the natural genius has any thing of ſagacity and brightneſs to make a right uſe of it. A *good judgment* muſt always in ſome meaſure depend upon a ſurvey and compariſon of ſeveral things together in the mind, and determining the truth of ſome doubtful propoſition by that ſurvey and compariſon. When the mind has, as it were, ſet all thoſe various objects preſent before it, which are neceſſary to form a true propoſition or judgment concerning any thing, it then determines that ſuch and ſuch ideas are to be joined or disjoined, to be affirmed or denied; and this in a conſiſtency and correſpondence with all thoſe other ideas or propoſitions which any way relate or belong to the ſame ſubject. Now there can be no ſuch comprehenſive ſurvey of many things without a tolerable degree of memory; it is by reviewing things paſt we learn to judge of the future: and it happens ſometimes that if one needful or important object or idea be abſent, the judgment concerning the thing inquired will thereby become falſe or miſtaken.

You will *inquire* then, How comes it to paſs that there are ſome perſons who appear in the world of

buſineſs, as well as in the world of learning, to have a good judgment, and have acquired the juſt character of prudence and wiſdom, and yet have neither a very bright genius nor ſagacity of thought, nor a very happy memory, ſo that they cannot ſet before their minds at once a large ſcene of ideas in order to paſs a judgment.

Now we may learn from *Penſeroſo* ſome account of this difficulty. You ſhall ſcarcely ever find this man forward in judging and determining things propoſed to him: but he always takes time, and delays, and ſuſpends, and ponders things maturely, before he paſſes his judgment: then he practiſes a ſlow meditation, ruminates on the ſubject, and thus perhaps in two or three nights and days rouſes and awakens thoſe ſeveral ideas, one after another as he can, which are neceſſary in order to judge aright of the thing propoſed, and makes them paſs before his review in ſucceſſion: this he doth to relieve the want both of a quick ſagacity of thought, and of a ready memory and ſpeedy recollection; and this caution and practice lays the foundation of his juſt judgment and wiſe conduct. He ſurveys well before he judges.

Whence I cannot but take occaſion to infer one good rule of advice to perſons of higher as well as lower genius, and of large as well as narrow memories, *viz.* That they do not too haſtily pronounce concerning matters of doubt or inquiry, where there is not an urgent neceſſity of preſent action. The bright genius is ready to be ſo forward as often betrays itſelf into great errors in judgment, ſpeech, and conduct, without a continual guard upon itſelf, and uſing the bridle of the tongue. And it is by this delay and precaution, that many a perſon of much lower natural abilities ſhall often excel perſons of the brighteſt genius in wiſdom and prudence.

It is often found, that a fine genius has but a feeble memory: for where the genius is bright, and the imagination vivid, the power of memory may be too much neglected, and loſe its improvement. An active

fancy readily wanders over a multitude of objects, and is continually entertaining itſelf with new flying images: it runs through a number of new ſcenes or new pages with pleaſure, but without due attention, and ſeldom ſuffers itſelf to dwell long enough upon any one of them to make a deep impreſſion thereof upon the mind, and commit it to laſting remembrance. This is one plain and obvious reaſon, why there are ſome perſons of very bright parts and active ſpirits, who have but ſhort and narrow powers of remembrance; for having riches of their own, they are not ſolicitous to borrow.

And as ſuch a quick and various fancy and invention may be ſome hindrance to the attention and memory, ſo a mind of a good retentive ability, and which is ever crowding its memory with things which it learns and reads continually, may prevent, reſtrain, and cramp the invention itſelf. The memory of *Lectorides* is ever ready upon all occaſions to offer to his mind ſomething out of other mens writings or converſations, and is preſenting him with the thoughts of other perſons perpetually: thus the man who had naturally a good flowing invention, does not ſuffer himſelf to purſue his own thoughts. Some perſons who have been bleſt by nature with ſagacity, and no contemptible genius, have too often forbid the exerciſe of it, by tying themſelves down to the memory of the volumes they have read, and the ſentiments of other men contained in them.

Where the memory has been almoſt conſtantly employing itſelf in ſcraping together new acquirements, and where there has not been a judgment ſufficient to diſtinguiſh what things were fit to be recommended and treaſured up in the memory, and what things were idle, uſeleſs, or needleſs, the mind has been filled with a wretched heap and hotch-potch of words or ideas, and the ſoul may be ſaid to have had *large* poſſeſſions, but *no true riches.*

I have read in ſome of Mr. *Milton*'s writings a very beautiful ſimile, whereby he repreſents the books of

the *fathers*, as they are called in the *Chriſtian* church. Whatſoever, ſaith he, Old Time with his huge dragnet has conveyed down to us along the ſtream of ages, whether it be ſhells or ſhell-fiſh, jewels or pebbles, ſticks or ſtraws, ſea-weeds or mud, theſe are the *ancients*, theſe are the *fathers*. The caſe is much the ſame with the memorial poſſeſſions of the greateſt part of mankind. A few uſeful things perhaps, mixed and confounded with many trifles and all manner of rubbiſh, fill up their memories and compoſe their intellectual poſſeſſions. It is a great happineſs therefore to diſtinguiſh things aright, and to lay up nothing in the memory but what has ſome juſt value in it, and is worthy to be numbered as a part of our treaſure.

Whatſoever improvements ariſe to the mind of man from the wiſe exerciſe of his own reaſoning powers, theſe may be called his proper *manufactures*; and whatſoever he borrows from abroad, theſe may be termed his *foreign treaſures*: both together make a wealthy and happy mind.

How many excellent judgments and reaſonings are framed in the mind of a man of wiſdom and ſtudy in a length of years? How many worthy and admirable notions has he been poſſeſſed of in life, both by his own reaſonings, and by his prudent and laborious collections in the courſe of his reading? But, alas! how many thouſands of them vaniſh away again and are loſt in empty air, for want of a ſtronger and more retentive memory? When a young practitioner in the law was once ſaid to conteſt a point of debate with that great lawyer in the laſt age, Sergeant *Maynard*, he is reported to have anſwered him, *Alas! young man, I have forgot much more law than ever thou haſt learnt or read.*

What an unknown and unſpeakable happineſs would it be to a man of judgment, and who is engaged in the purſuit of knowledge, if he had but a power of ſtamping all his own beſt ſentiments upon his memory in ſome indelible characters; and if he could but imprint every valuable paragraph and ſentiment of the moſt excellent authors he has read, upon his mind,

with the ſame ſpeed and facility with which he read them? If a man of good genius and ſagacity could but retain and ſurvey all thoſe numerous, thoſe wiſe and beautiful ideas at once, which have ever paſſed through his thoughts upon any one ſubject, how admirably would he be furniſhed to paſs a juſt judgment about all preſent objects and occurrences? What a glorious entertainment would fill and felicitate his ſpirit, if he could graſp all theſe in a ſingle ſurvey; as the ſkilful eye of a painter runs over a fine and complicate piece of hiſtory wrought by the hand of a *Titian* or a *Raphael*, views the whole ſcene at once, and feeds himſelf with the extenſive delight? But theſe are joys that do not belong to mortality.

Thus far I have indulged ſome looſe and unconnected thoughts and remarks with regard to the different powers of *wit*, *memory*, and *judgment*. For it was very difficult to throw them into a regular form or method without more room. Let us now with more regularity treat of the *memory* alone.

Though the *memory* be a natural faculty of the mind of man, and belongs to ſpirits which are not incarnate, yet it is greatly aſſiſted or hindered, and much diverſified by the brain or the animal nature, to which the ſoul is united in this preſent ſtate. But what part of the brain that is, wherein the images of things lie treaſured up, is very hard for us to determine with certainty. It is moſt probable that thoſe very fibres, pores, or traces of the brain, which aſſiſt at the firſt idea or perception of any object, are the ſame which aſſiſt alſo at the recollection of it: and then it will follow that the memory has no ſpecial part of the brain devoted to its own ſervice, but uſes all thoſe parts in general which ſubſerve our ſenſations, as well as our thinking and reaſoning powers.

As the memory grows and improves in young perſons from their childhood, and decays in old age, ſo it may be increaſed by art and labour, and proper exerciſe; or it may be injured and quite ſpoiled by ſloth, or by a diſeaſe, or a ſtroke on the head. There are

ſome reaſonings on this ſubject which make it evident, that the *goodneſs of a memory* depends in a great degree upon the conſiſtence and the temperature of that part of the brain which is appointed to aſſiſt the exerciſe of all our ſenſible and intellectual faculties.

So for inſtance, *in children;* they perceive and forget a hundred things in an hour; the brain is ſo ſoft that it receives immediately all impreſſions like water or liquid mud, and retains ſcarcely any of them: all the traces, forms, or images which are drawn there, are immediately effaced or cloſed up again, as though you wrote with your finger on the ſurface of a river, or on a veſſel of oil.

On the contrary, *in old age,* men have a very feeble remembrance of things that were done of late, *i. e.* the ſame day, or week, or year; the brain is grown ſo hard that the preſent images or ſtrokes make little or no impreſſion, and therefore they immediately vaniſh: *Priſco,* in his ſeventy-eighth year, will tell long ſtories of things done when he was in the battle at the *Boyne* almoſt fifty years ago, and when he ſtudied at *Oxford* ſeven years before; for thoſe impreſſions were made when the brain was more ſuſceptive of them; they have been deeply engraven at the proper ſeaſon, and therefore they remain. But words or things which he lately ſpoke or did, they are immediately forgotten, becauſe the brain is now grown more dry and ſolid in its conſiſtence, and receives not much more impreſſion than if you wrote with your finger on a floor of clay, or a plaiſtered wall.

But in the middle ſtage of life, or it may be from fifteen to fifty years of age, the memory is generally in its happieſt ſtate, the brain eaſily receives and long retains the images and traces which are impreſſed upon it, and the natural ſpirits are more active to range theſe little infinite unknown figures of things in their proper cells or cavities, to preſerve and recollect them.

Whatſoever therefore keeps the brain in its beſt temper and conſiſtence may be a help to preſerve the memory: but exceſs of wine, or luxury of any kind, as

well as exceſs in the ſtudies of learning or the buſineſſes of life, may overwhelm the memory, by overſtraining and weakening the fibres of the brain, over-waſting the ſpirits, injuring the true conſiſtence of that tender ſubſtance, and confounding the images that are laid up there.

A *good memory* has theſe ſeveral qualifications, (1.) It is *ready to receive and admit with* great *eaſe* the various ideas both of words and things which are learned or taught. (2.) It is *large and copious to treaſure up* theſe ideas in great number and variety. (3.) It is *ſtrong and durable to retain* for a conſiderable time thoſe words or thoughts which are committed to it. (4.) It is *faithful and active to ſuggeſt and recollect* upon every proper occaſion, all thoſe words or thoughts which have been recommended to its care, or treaſured up in it.

Now in every one of theſe qualifications a memory may be injured, or may be improved: yet I ſhall not inſiſt diſtinctly on theſe particulars, but only in general propoſe a few *rules* or *directions*, whereby this noble faculty of *memory*, in all its branches and qualifications, may be preſerved or aſſiſted, and ſhew what are the practices that both by reaſon and experience have been found of happy influence to this purpoſe.

There is one great and *general direction* which belongs to the improvement of other powers as well as of the *memory*, and that is, *to keep it always in due and proper exerciſe*. Many acts by degrees form a habit, and thereby the ability or power is ſtrengthened and made more ready to appear again in action. Our memories ſhould be uſed and inured from childhood to bear a moderate quantity of knowledge let into them early, and they will thereby become ſtrong for uſe and ſervice. As any limb well and duly exerciſed grows ſtronger, the nerves of the body are corroborated thereby. *Milo* took up a calf, and daily carried it on his ſhoulders: as the calf grew, his ſtrength grew alſo, and he at laſt arrived at firmneſs of joints enough to bear the bull.

Our memories will be in a great meaſure moulded and formed, improved or injured, according to the exerciſe of them. If we never uſe them they will be almoſt loſt. Thoſe who are wont to converſe or read about a few things only, will retain but a few in their memory: thoſe who are uſed to remember things but for an hour, and charge their memories with it no longer, will retain them but an hour before they vaniſh. And let words be remembered as well as things, that ſo you may acquire a *copia verborum* as well as *rerum*, and be more ready to expreſs your mind on all occaſions.

Yet there ſhould be a caution given in ſome caſes; the memory of a child, or any infirm perſon, ſhould not be overburdened; for a limb or a joint may be overſtrained by being too much loaded, and its natural power never be recovered. Teachers ſhould wiſely judge of the power and conſtitution of youth, and impoſe no more on them than they are able to bear with cheerfulneſs and improvement.

And particularly they ſhould take care, that the memory of the learner be not too much crowded with a tumultuous heap or overbearing multitude of documents or ideas at one time; this is the way to remember nothing; one idea effaces another. An over-greedy graſp does not retain the largeſt handful. But it is the *exerciſe of memory* with a due moderation, that is one *general rule* towards the improvement of it.

The *particular rules* are ſuch as theſe:

1. *Due attention and diligence to learn and know things* which we would commit to our remembrance, is a rule of great neceſſity in this caſe. When the attention is ſtrongly fixed to any particular ſubject, all that is ſaid concerning it makes a deeper impreſſion upon the mind. There are ſome perſons who complain they cannot remember divine or human diſcourſes which they hear, when in truth their thoughts are wandering half the time, or they hear with ſuch coldneſs and indifferency, and a trifling temper of ſpirit, that it is no wonder the things which are read or ſpoken make but

a ſlight impreſſion on the brain, and get no firm footing in the ſeat of memory, but ſoon vaniſh and are loſt.

It is needful therefore, if we would maintain a long remembrance of the things which we read or hear, that we ſhould engage our delight and pleaſure in thoſe ſubjects, and uſe the other methods which are before preſcribed in order to *fix the attention*. Sloth, indolence, and idleneſs, will no more bleſs the mind with intellectual riches, than it will fill the hand with gain, the field with corn, or the purſe with treaſure.

Let it be added alſo, that not only the ſlothful and the negligent deprive themſelves of proper knowledge for the furniture of their memory, but ſuch as appear to have active ſpirits, who are ever ſkimming over the ſurface of things with a volatile temper, will fix nothing in their mind. *Vario* will ſpend whole mornings in running over looſe and unconnected pages, and with freſh curioſity is ever glancing over new words and ideas that ſtrike his preſent fancy: he is fluttering over a thouſand objects of art and ſcience, and yet treaſures up but little knowledge. There muſt be the labour and the diligence of cloſe attention to particular ſubjects of thought and inquiry, which only can impreſs what we read or think of upon the remembering faculty in man.

2. *Clear and diſtinct apprehenſion of the things which we commit to memory*, is neceſſary in order to make them ſtick and dwell there. If we would remember words, or learn the names of perſons or things, we ſhould have them recommended to our memory by clear and diſtinct pronunciation, ſpelling, or writing. If we would treaſure up the ideas of things, notions, propoſitions, arguments, and ſciences, theſe ſhould be recommended alſo to our memory by a clear and diſtinct perception of them. Faint, glimmering, and confuſed ideas will vaniſh like images ſeen in twilight. Every thing which we learn ſhould be conveyed to the underſtanding in the plaineſt expreſſions without any ambiguity, that we may not miſtake what we deſire to remember. This is a general rule whether we

would employ the memory about words or things, though it muſt be confeſt that mere ſounds and words are much harder to get by heart than the knowledge of things and real images.

For this reaſon take heed (as I have often before warned) that you do not take up with *words* inſtead of *things*, nor mere *ſounds* inſtead of real *ſentiments* and *ideas*. Many a lad forgets what has been taught him, merely becauſe he never well underſtood it: he never clearly and diſtinctly took in the meaning of thoſe ſounds and ſyllables which he was required to get by heart.

This is one true reaſon why boys make ſo poor a proficiency in learning the *Latin* tongue, under maſters who teach them by grammars and rules written in *Latin*, of which I have ſpoken before. And this is a common caſe with children when they learn their catechiſms in their early days. The language and the ſentiments conveyed in thoſe catechiſms are far above the underſtanding of creatures of that age, and they have no tolerable ideas under the words. This makes the anſwers much harder to be remembered, and in truth they learn nothing but words without ideas; and if they are ever ſo perfect in repeating the words, yet they know nothing of divinity.

And for this reaſon it is a neceſſary rule in teaching children the principles of religion, that they ſhould be expreſſed in very plain, eaſy, and familiar words, brought as low as poſſible down to their underſtandings, according to their different ages and capacities, and thereby they will obtain ſome uſeful knowledge when the words are treaſured up in their memory, becauſe at the ſame time they will treaſure up thoſe divine ideas too.

3. *Method and regularity in the things we commit to memory*, is neceſſary in order to make them take more effectual poſſeſſion of the mind, and abide there long. As much as *ſyſtematical* learning is decried by ſome vain and humorous triflers of the age, it is certainly the

happieſt way to furniſh the mind with a variety of knowledge.

Whatſoever you would truſt to your memory, let it be diſpoſed in a proper method, connected well together, and referred to diſtinct and particular heads or claſſes, both general and particular. An apothecary's boy will much ſooner learn all the medicines in his maſter's ſhop, when they are ranged in boxes or on ſhelves according to their diſtinct natures, whether herbs, drugs, or minerals, whether leaves or roots, whether *chymical* or *Galenical* preparations, whether ſimple or compound, *&c.* and when they are placed in ſome order according to their nature, their fluidity, or their conſiſtence, *&c.* in phials, bottles, gallipots, caſes, drawers, *&c.* So the genealogy of a family is more eaſily learnt when you begin at ſome great grandfather as the root, and diſtinguiſh the ſtock, the large boughs, the leſſer branches, the twigs, and the buds, till you come down to the preſent infants of the houſe. And indeed all ſorts of arts and ſciences taught in a method ſomething of this kind, are more happily committed to the mind or memory.

I might give another plain ſimile to confirm the truth of this. What horſe or carriage can take up and bear away all the various, rude, and unwieldy loppings of a branchy tree at once? But if they are divided yet further, ſo as to be laid cloſe, and bound up in a more uniform manner into ſeveral faggots, perhaps thoſe loppings may be all carried as one ſingle load or burden.

The mutual dependence of things on each other help the memory of both. A wiſe connexion of the parts of a diſcourſe in a rational method, gives great advantage to the reader or hearer in order to his remembrance of it. Therefore many *mathematical* demonſtrations in a long train may be remembered much better than a heap of ſentences which have no connexion. The book of *Proverbs*, at leaſt from the tenth chapter and onwards, is much harder to remember than the book of *Pſalms* for this reaſon: and ſome

Chriſtians have told me, that they remember what is written in the Epiſtle to the *Romans*, and that to the *Hebrews*, much better than many others of the ſacred Epiſtles, becauſe there is more exact method and connexion obſerved in them.

He that would learn to remember a ſermon which he hears, ſhould acquaint himſelf by degrees with the method in which the ſeveral important parts of it are delivered. It is a certain fault in a multitude of preachers, that they utterly neglect method in their harangues: or at leaſt they refuſe to render their method viſible and ſenſible to the hearers. One would be tempted to think it was for fear leſt their auditors ſhould remember too much of their ſermons, and prevent their preaching them three or four times over: but I have candour enough to perſuade myſelf, that the true reaſon is, they imagine it to be a more modiſh way of preaching without particulars; I am ſure it is a much more uſeleſs one. And it would be of great advantage both to the ſpeaker and hearer, to have diſcourſes for the pulpit caſt into a plain and eaſy method, and the reaſons or inferences ranged in a proper order, and that under the words, *firſt*, *ſecondly*, and *thirdly*, however they may be now fancied to ſound unpolite or unfaſhionable: but Archbiſhop *Tillotſon* did not think ſo in his days.

4. *A frequent review and careful repetition* of the things we would learn, *and an abridgment of them in a narrow compaſs for this end*, has a great influence to fix them in the memory: therefore it is that the rules of *grammar*, and uſeful examples of the variation of words, and the peculiar forms of ſpeech in any language, are ſo often appointed by the maſter as leſſons for the ſcholars to be frequently repeated; and they are contracted into tables for frequent review, that what is not fixed in the mind at firſt, may be ſtamped upon the memory by a perpetual ſurvey and rehearſal.

Repetition is ſo very uſeful a practice, that *Mnemon*, even from his youth to his old age, never read a book without making ſome ſmall points, daſhes, or hooks

in the margin, to mark what parts of the diſcourſe were proper for a review: and when he came to the end of a ſection or chapter, he always ſhut his book, and recollected all the ſentiments or expreſſions he had remarked, ſo that he could give a tolerable *analyſis* and *abſtract* of every treatiſe he had read, juſt after he had finiſhed it. Thence he became ſo well furniſhed with a rich variety of knowledge.

Even when a perſon is hearing a ſermon, or a lecture, he may give his thoughts leave now and then to ſtep back ſo far as to recollect the ſeveral heads of it from the beginning, two or three times before the lecture or ſermon is finiſhed: the omiſſion or the loſs of a ſentence or two among the amplifications, is richly compenſated by preſerving in the mind the method and order of the whole diſcourſe in the moſt important branches of it.

If we would fix in the memory the diſcourſes we hear, or what we deſign to ſpeak, *let us abſtract them into brief compends*, and review them often. Lawyers and divines have need of ſuch aſſiſtances: *they write down ſhort notes or hints of the principal heads* of what they deſire to commit to their memory, in order to preach or plead; for ſuch abſtracts and epitomes may be reviewed much ſooner, and the ſeveral amplifying ſentiments or ſentences will be more eaſily invented or recollected in their proper places. The art of *ſhort hand* is of excellent uſe for this as well as other purpoſes. It muſt be acknowledged, that thoſe who ſcarcely ever take a pen in their hands to write ſhort notes or hints of what they are to ſpeak or learn, who never try to caſt things into method, or to contract the ſurvey of them, in order to commit them to their memory, had need have a double degree of that natural power of retaining and recollecting what they read or hear, or intend to ſpeak.

Do not plunge yourſelf into other buſineſſes or ſtudies, amuſements or recreations, immediately after you have attended upon inſtruction, if you can well avoid it. Get time if poſſible to recollect the things you have

heard, that they may not be waſhed all away from the mind by a torrent of other occurrences or engagements, nor loſt in the crowd or clamour of other loud and importunate affairs.

Talking over the things which you have read with your companions on the firſt proper opportunity you have for it, is a moſt uſeful manner of review or repetition, in order to fix them upon the mind. Teach them your younger friends, in order to eſtabliſh your own knowledge while you communicate it to them. The animal powers of your tongue and of your ear, as well as your intellectual faculties, will all join together to help the memory. *Hermetas* ſtudied hard in a remote corner of the land, and in ſolitude, yet he became a very learned man. He ſeldom was ſo happy as to enjoy ſuitable ſociety at home, and therefore he talked over to the fields and the woods in the evening what he had been reading in the day, and found ſo conſiderable advantage by this practice, that he recommended it to all his friends, ſince he could ſet his *probatum* to it for ſeventeen years.

5. *Pleaſure and delight in the things we learn*, gives great aſſiſtance towards the remembrance of them. Whatſoever therefore we deſire that a child ſhould commit to his memory, make it as pleaſant to him as poſſible; endeavour to ſearch his genius and his temper; and let him take in the inſtructions you give him, or the leſſons you appoint him, as far as may be, in a way ſuited to his natural inclination. *Fabellus* would never learn any moral leſſons till they were moulded into the form of ſome fiction or fable like thoſe of *Æſop*, or till they put on the appearance of a parable, like thoſe wherein our bleſſed *Saviour* taught the ignorant world: then he remembered well the emblematical inſtructions that were given him, and learnt to practiſe the moral ſenſe and meaning of them. Young *Spectorius* was taught virtue, by ſetting before him a variety of examples of the various good qualities in human life; and he was appointed daily to repeat ſome ſtory of this kind out of *Valerius Maximus*. The ſame lad was early in-

ſtructed to avoid the common vices and follies of youth in the ſame manner. This is a-kin to the method whereby the *Lacedemonians* trained up their children to hate drunkenneſs and intemperance, *viz.* by bringing a drunken man into their company, and ſhewing them what a beaſt he had made of himſelf. Such viſible and ſenſible forms of inſtruction will make long and uſeful impreſſions upon the memory.

Children may be taught to remember many things in a way of ſport and play. Some young creatures have learnt their letters and ſyllables, and the pronouncing and ſpelling of words, by having them paſted or written upon many little flat tablets or dies. Some have been taught vocabularies of different languages, having a word in one tongue written on one ſide of theſe tablets, and the ſame word in another tongue on the other ſide of them.

There might be alſo many entertaining contrivances for the inſtruction of children in ſeveral things relating to *geometry*, *geography* and *aſtronomy*, in ſuch alluring and luſory methods, which would make a moſt agreeable and laſting impreſſion on their minds.

6. The memory of uſeful things may receive conſiderable aid *if they are thrown into verſe:* for the numbers, and meaſures, and rhyme, according to the poeſy of different languages, have a conſiderable influence upon mankind, both to make them receive with more eaſe the things propoſed to their obſervation, and preſerve them longer in their remembrance. How many are there of the common affairs of human life, which have been taught in early years by the help of rhyme, and have been like *nails faſtened in a ſure place*, and rivetted by daily uſe?

So the number of the days of each month are engraven on the memory of thouſands by theſe four lines;

Thirty days have September,
June, *and* April, *and* November:
February *twenty-eight alone,*
And all the reſt have thirty-one.

So lads have been taught frugality by ſurveying and judging of their own expences by theſe three lines:

Compute the pence but of one day's expence,
So many pounds and angels, groats and pence,
Are ſpent in one whole year's circumference.

For the number of days in a year is three hundred ſixty-five, which number of pence makes one pound, one angel, one groat, and one penny.

So have rules of health been preſcribed in the book called *Schola Salernitana*, and many a perſon has preſerved himſelf doubtleſs from evening gluttony, and the pains and diſeaſes conſequent upon it, by theſe two lines:

Ex magna cœna ſtomacho ſit maxima pœna:
Ut ſis nocte levis, ſit tibi cœna brevis.

Engliſhed:

To be eaſy all night,
Let your ſupper be light:
Or elſe you'll complain
Of a ſtomach in pain.

And a hundred *proverbial* ſentences in various languages are formed into rhyme or a verſe, whereby they are made to ſtick upon the memory of old and young.

It is from this principle that *moral rules* have been caſt into a *poetic mould* from all antiquity. So the golden verſes of the *Pythagoreans* in *Greek*; *Cato*'s diſtichs *De Moribus* in *Latin*; *Lilly*'s precepts to ſcholars called *Qui mihi*, with many others; and this has been done with very good ſucceſs. A line or two of this kind recurring on the memory, have often guarded youth from a temptation to vice and folly, as well as put them in mind of their preſent duty.

It is for this reaſon alſo that the *genders*, *declenſions*, and *variations* of nouns and verbs have been taught in verſe, by thoſe who have complied with the prejudice

of long cuſtom, to teach *Engliſh* children the *Latin* tongue by rules written in *Latin*: and truly thoſe rude heaps of words and terminations of an unknown tongue would have never been ſo happily learnt by heart by a hundred thouſand boys without this ſmoothing artifice; nor indeed do I know any thing elſe can be ſaid with good reaſon, to excuſe or relieve the obvious abſurdities of this practice.

When you would remember new things or words, *endeavour to aſſociate and connect them with ſome words or things which you have well known before, and which are fixed and eſtabliſhed in your memory.* This aſſociation of ideas is of great importance and force, and may be of excellent uſe in many inſtances of human life. One idea which is familiar to the mind, connected with others which are new and ſtrange, will bring thoſe new ideas into eaſy remembrance. *Maronides* had got the firſt hundred lines of *Virgil*'s *Æneis* printed upon his memory ſo perfectly, that he knew not only the order and number of every verſe from one to a hundred in perfection, but the order and number of every word in each verſe alſo; and by this means he would undertake to remember two or three hundred names of perſons or things by ſome rational or fantaſtic connexion between ſome word in the verſe, and ſome letter, ſyllable, property, or accident of the name or thing to be remembered, even though they had been repeated but once or twice at moſt in his hearing. *Animato* practiſed much the ſame art of memory, by getting the *Latin* names of twenty-two animals into his head according to the alphabet, viz. *aſinus, baſiliſcus, canis, draco, elephas, felis, gryphus, hircus, juvencus, leo, mulus, noctua, ovis, panthera, quadrupes, rhinoceros, ſimia, taurus, urſus, xiphias, hyæna* or *yæna, zibetta*. Moſt of theſe he divided alſo into four parts, *viz.* head and body, feet, fins or wings, and tail, and by ſome arbitrary or chimerical attachment of each of theſe to a word or thing which he deſired to remember, he committed them to the care of his memory, and that with good ſucceſs.

It is alſo by this *aſſociation of ideas*, that we may better imprint any new idea upon the memory, by joining with it ſome *circumſtance* of the *time, place, company*, &c. wherein we firſt obſerved, heard, or learnt it. If we would recover an abſent idea, it is uſeful to recollect thoſe circumſtances of time, place, *&c.* The ſubſtance will many times be recovered and brought to the thoughts by recollecting the ſhadow: a man recurs to our fancy by remembering his garment, his ſize, or ſtature, his office, or employment, *&c.* A beaſt, bird, or fiſh, by its colour, figure, or motion, by the cage, or court-yard, or ciſtern wherein it was kept.

To this head alſo we may refer that remembrance of names and things which may be derived from our recollection of their *likeneſs to other things* which we know; either their reſemblance in name, character, form, accident, or any thing that belongs to them. An idea or word which has been loſt or forgotten, has been often recovered by hitting upon ſome other kindred word or idea, which has the neareſt reſemblance to it, and that in the letters, ſyllables, or ſound of the name, as well as properties of the thing.

If we would remember *Hippocrates*, or *Galen*, or *Paracelſus*, think of a phyſician's name, beginning with *H*, *G*, or *P*. If we will remember *Ovidius Naſo*, we may repreſent a man with a great noſe; if *Plato*, we may think upon a perſon with large ſhoulders; if *Criſpus*, we ſhall fancy another with curled hair; and ſo of other things.

And ſometimes a new or ſtrange idea may be fixed in the memory, by conſidering its *contrary* or *oppoſite*. So if we cannot hit on the word *Goliath*, the remembrance of *David* may recover it; or the name of a *Trojan* may be recovered by thinking of a *Greek*, &c.

8. In ſuch caſes wherein it may be done, *ſeek after a local memory*, or a remembrance of what you have read by the ſide or page where it is written or printed; whether the right or the left, whether at the top, the middle, or the bottom; whether at the beginning of a chapter or a paragraph, or the end of it. It has been

ſome advantage, for this reaſon, to accuſtom one's ſelf to books of the ſame edition: and it has been of conſtant and ſpecial uſe to divines and private Chriſtians, to be furniſhed with ſeveral *Bibles* of the ſame edition, that whereſoever they are, whether in their chamber, parlour, or ſtudy, in the younger or elder years of life, they may find the chapters and verſes ſtanding in the ſame parts of the page.

This is alſo a great conveniency to be obſerved by printers in the new editions of *Grammars*, *Pſalms*, *Teſtaments*, &c. to print every chapter, paragraph, or verſe, in the ſame part of the page as the former, that ſo it may yield an happy aſſiſtance to thoſe young learners who find, and even feel, the advantage of a *local memory*.

9. Let every thing we deſire to remember *be fairly and diſtinctly written and divided into periods, with large characters in the beginning*, for by this means we ſhall the more readily imprint the matter and words on our minds, and recollect them with a glance, the more remarkable the writing appears to the *eye*. This *ſenſe* conveys the ideas to the fancy better than any other; and what we have *ſeen* is not ſo ſoon forgotten as what we have only heard. What *Horace* affirms of the *mind* or *paſſions* may be ſaid alſo of the *memory*.

Segnius irritant animos demiſſa per aurem
Quam quæ ſunt oculis ſubjecta fidelibus, et quæ
Ipſe ſibi tradit ſpectator.

Applied thus in *Engliſh*:

Sounds which addreſs the ear are loſt and die
In one ſhort hour; but that which ſtrikes the eye
Lives long upon the mind; the faithful ſight
Engraves the knowledge with a beam of light.

For the aſſiſtance of weak memories, the firſt letters or words of every period, in every page, may be written in diſtinct colours; yellow, green, red, black, &c. and if you obſerve the ſame order of colours in the following ſentences, it may be ſtill the better. This will make a great impreſſion, and may much aid the memory.

Under this head we may take notice of the advantage which the memory gains, by having the *ſeveral objects of our learning drawn out into ſchemes and tables*; matters of *mathematical* ſcience and *natural philoſophy* are not only let into the underſtanding, but preſerved in the memory by *figures* and *diagrams*. The ſituation of the ſeveral parts of the earth are better learnt by one day's converſing with a *map* or *ſea-chart*, than by mere reading the deſcription of their ſituation a hundred times over in books of *geography*. So the conſtellations in *aſtronomy*, and their poſition in the heavens, are more eaſily remembered by hemiſpheres of the ſtars well drawn. It is by having ſuch ſort of memorials, figures, and tables hung round our ſtudies, or places of reſidence or reſort, that our memory of theſe things will be greatly aſſiſted and improved, as I have ſhewn at large in the twentieth chapter, of the *Uſe of the Sciences*.

I might add here alſo, that *once writing over* what we deſign to remember, and giving due attention to what we write, will fix it more in the mind than reading it five times. And in the ſame manner, if we had a plan of the naked lines of longitude and latitude, projected on the *meridian* printed for this uſe, a learner might much more ſpeedily advance himſelf in the knowledge of *geography* by his own drawing the figures of all the parts of the world upon it by imitation, than by many days ſurvey of a map of the world ſo printed. The ſame alſo may be ſaid concerning the conſtellations of heaven, drawn by the learner on a naked projection of the circles of the ſphere upon the plane of the *equator*.

10. It has ſometimes been the practice of men to imprint names or ſentences on their memory, by *taking the firſt letters of every word of that ſentence, or of thoſe names*, and making a new word out of them. So the name of the *Maccabees* is borrowed from the firſt letters of the *Hebrew* words which make that ſentence, *Mi Camoka Baelim Jehovah*, i. e. Who is like thee among the gods? which was written ont heir banners. *Jeſus Chriſt*, our Saviour, hath been called a *fiſh*, in *Greek* ΙΧΘΥΣ, by the fathers, becauſe theſe are the

firſt letters of thoſe *Greek* words, *Jeſus Chriſt, God's Son, the Saviour.* So the word *vibgyor* teaches us to remember the order of the ſeven original colours, as they appear by the ſun-beams caſt through a priſm on white paper, or formed by the ſun in a rainbow, according to the different refrangibility of the rays, *viz. violet, indigo, blue, green, yellow, orange,* and *red.*

In this manner the *Hebrew* grammarians teach their ſtudents to remember the letters which change their natural pronunciation by the inſcription of a *dageſh*, by gathering theſe ſix letters, *beth, gimel, daleth, caph, pe,* and *thau*, into the word *begadchephat*; and that they might not forget the letters named *quieſcent*, viz. *a, h, v,* and *i*, they are joined in the word *ahevi.* So the univerſal and particular propoſitions in *logic*, are remembered by the words *barbara, celarent, Darii*, &c.

Other artificial helps to memory may be juſt mentioned here.

Dr. *Grey*, in his book called *Memoria Technica*, has exchanged the figures 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, for ſome conſonants, *b, d, t, f, l, y, p, k, n*, and ſome vowels, *a, e, i, o, u*, and ſeveral diphthongs, and thereby formed words that denote numbers, which may be more eaſily remembered: and Mr. *Lowe* has improved his ſcheme, in a ſmall pamphlet called *Mnemonies delineated*, whereby, in ſeven leaves, he has comprized almoſt an infinity of things in ſcience and in common life, and reduced them to a ſort of meaſure like *Latin* verſe; though the words may be ſuppoſed to be very barbarous, being ſuch a mixture of vowels and conſonants as are very unfit for harmony.

But after all, the very writers on this ſubject have confeſſed, that ſeveral of theſe *artificial* helps of memory are ſo cumberſome as not to be ſuitable to every temper or perſon; nor are they of any uſe for the delivery of a diſcourſe by memory, nor of much ſervice in learning the ſciences: but they may be ſometimes practiſed for the aſſiſting our remembrance of certain ſentences, numbers, or names.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of determining a QUESTION.

I.

WHEN a ſubject is propoſed to your thoughts, *conſider whether it be knowable at all, or no;* and then whether it be not above the reach of your inquiry and knowledge in the *preſent ſtate;* and remember that it is a great waſte of time, to buſy yourſelves too much amongſt *unſearchables:* the chief uſe of theſe ſtudies is to keep the mind humble, by finding its own ignorance and weakneſs.

II. *CONSIDER* again *whether the matter be worthy of your inquiry* at all; and then, how far it may be worthy of your preſent ſearch and labour according to your age, your time of life, your ſtation in the world, your capacity, your profeſſion, your chief deſign and end. There are many things worth inquiry to one man, which are not ſo to another; and there are things that may deſerve the ſtudy of the ſame perſon in one part of life, which would be improper or impertinent at another. To read books of the *art of preaching*, or diſputes about *church-diſcipline*, are proper for a *theological ſtudent* in the end of his *academical* ſtudies, but not at the beginning of them. To purſue *mathematical* ſtudies very largely, may be uſeful for a *profeſſor of philoſophy*, but not for a *divine*.

III. *CONSIDER whether the ſubject of your inquiry be eaſy or difficult; whether you have ſufficient foundation or ſkill, furniture and advantages, for the purſuit of it.* It would be madneſs for a young *ſtatuary* to attempt at firſt to carve a *Venus* or a *Mercury*, and eſpecially without proper tools. And it is equal folly for a man to pretend to make great improvements in *natural philoſophy* without due experiments.

IV. *CONSIDER whether the ſubject be any ways uſeful or no*, before you engage in the ſtudy of it: of-

ten put this queſtion to yourſelves, *Cui bono?* to what purpoſe? What end will it attain? Is it for the glory of God, for the good of men, for your own advantage, for the removal of any natural or moral evil, for the attainment of any natural or moral good? Will the profit be equal to the labour? There are many ſubtle impertinencies learnt in the ſchools, many painful trifles even among the *mathematical* theorems and problems, many *difficiles nugæ*, or laborious follies of various kinds, which ſome ingenious men have been engaged in. A due reflection upon theſe things will call the mind away from vain amuſements, and ſave much time.

V. *CONSIDER what tendency it has to make you wiſer and better*, as well as to make you *more learned*; and thoſe queſtions which tend to wiſdom and prudence in our conduct among men, as well as piety toward God, are doubtleſs more important, and preferable beyond all thoſe inquiries which only improve our knowledge in mere ſpeculations.

VI. If the queſtion appear to be well worth your diligent application, and you are furniſhed with the neceſſary requiſites to purſue it, then *conſider whether it be dreſt up and entangled in more words than is needful*, and contain or include *more complicated ideas than is neceſſary*; and if ſo, endeavour to reduce it to a greater ſimplicity and plainneſs, which will make the inquiry and argument eaſier and plainer all the way.

VII. If it be ſtated in *an improper, obſcure, or irregular form*, it may be meliorated by *changing the phraſe, or tranſpoſing the parts of it*; but be careful always to keep the *grand and important point of inquiry the ſame* in your new ſtating the queſtion. Little tricks and deceits of ſophiſtry, by ſliding in, or leaving out ſuch words as entirely change the queſtion, ſhould be abandoned and renounced by all fair diſputants and honeſt ſearchers after truth.

The *ſtating a queſtion with clearneſs and juſtice* goes a great way many times toward the anſwering it. The greateſt part of true knowledge lies in a *diſtinct* percep-

tion of things which are in themſelves diſtinct; and ſome men give more light and knowledge by the bare *ſtating of the queſtion* with perſpicuity and juſtice, than others by *talking of it in groſs confuſion for whole hours together.* To *ſtate a queſtion* is but to ſeparate and diſentangle the parts of it from one another, as well as from every thing which doth not concern the queſtion, and then to lay the diſentangled parts of the queſtion in due order and method: oftentimes without more ado this fully reſolves the doubt, and ſhews the mind where the truth lies, without argument or diſpute.

VIII. If the queſtion relate to an *axiom* or *firſt principle of truth*, remember that a long train of conſequences may depend upon it, *therefore it ſhould not be ſuddenly admitted or received.*

It is not enough to determine the truth of a propoſition, much leſs to raiſe it to the honour of an *axiom* or *firſt principle*, to ſay, that it has been believed through many ages, that it has been received by many nations, that it is almoſt univerſally acknowledged, or nobody denies it, that it is eſtabliſhed by human laws, or that temporal penalties or reproaches will attend the diſbelief of it.

IX. *NOR is it enough to forbid any propoſition the title of an axiom, becauſe it has been denied by ſome perſons, and doubted of by others*; for ſome perſons have been *unreaſonably credulous*, and others have been as *unreaſonably ſceptical.* Then only ſhould a propoſition be called an *axiom* or a *ſelf-evident truth*, when by a moderate attention to the ſubject and predicate, their connexion appears in ſo plain a light, and ſo clear an evidence, as needs no third idea, or middle term, to prove them to be connected.

X. While you are in ſearch after truth in queſtions of a doubtful nature, or ſuch as you have not yet thoroughly examined, *keep up a juſt indifference to either ſide of the queſtion*, if you would be led honeſtly into the truth: for a deſire or inclination leaning to either ſide, biaſſes the judgment ſtrangely; whereas by this indifference for every thing but truth, you will be excited

to examine fairly inſtead of preſuming, and your aſſent will be ſecured from going beyond your evidence.

XI. For the moſt part people are born to their opinions, and never queſtion the truth of what *their family*, or *their country*, or *their party* profeſs. They clothe their minds as they do their bodies, after the faſhion in vogue, nor one of a hundred ever examines their principles. It is ſuſpected of *lukewarmneſs* to ſuppoſe examination neceſſary, and it will be charged as a *tendency to apoſtacy* if we go about to examine them. Perſons are applauded for preſuming they are in the right, and (as Mr. *Locke* ſaith) he that conſiders and inquires into the reaſon of things is counted a *foe to orthodoxy*, becauſe poſſibly he may deviate from ſome of the received doctrines. And thus men without any induſtry or acquiſition of their own (lazy and idle as they are), inherit *local truths*, i. e. the truths of that place where they live, and are inured to aſſent without evidence.

This hath a long and unhappy influence; for if a man can bring his mind once to be poſitive and fierce for propoſitions whoſe evidence he hath never examined, and that in matters of the greateſt concernment, he will naturally follow this ſhort and eaſy way of judging and believing in caſes of leſs moment, and build all his opinions upon inſufficient grounds.

XII. In determining a queſtion, eſpecially when it is a matter of difficulty and importance, *do not take up with partial examination*, but turn your thoughts on all ſides, to gather in all the light you can toward the ſolution of it. Take time, and uſe all the helps that are to be attained before you fully determine, except only where preſent neceſſity of action calls for ſpeedy determination.

If you would know what may be called a *partial examination*, take theſe inſtances, *viz.*

When you examine an *object of ſenſe*, or inquire into ſome matter of *ſenſation* at too *great a diſtance* from the object, or in an *inconvenient ſituation* of it, or under any *indiſpoſition* of the *organs*, or any *diſguiſe* whatſoever re-

lating to the *medium* or the *organ* of the *object* itſelf; or when you examine it by *the ſenſe only*, where others might be employed; or when you inquire into it by *ſenſe only*, without the uſe of the *underſtanding*, and *judgment*, and *reaſon*.

If it be a queſtion which is to be *determined* by *reaſon* and *argument*, then your examination is partial, when you turn the queſtion only in one light, and do not turn it on all ſides; when you look upon it only in its relations and aſpects to one ſort of objects, and not to another; when you conſider only the advantages of it, and the reaſons for it, and neglect to think of the reaſons againſt it, and never ſurvey its inconveniences too; when you determine on a ſudden, before you have given yourſelf a due time for weighing all circumſtances, *&c.*

Again, If it be a *queſtion of fact depending upon the report or teſtimony of men*, your examination is but partial, when you inquire only what one man or a few ſay, and avoid the teſtimony of others; when you only aſk what thoſe report who were not eye or ear-witneſſes, and neglect thoſe who ſaw and heard it; when you content yourſelf with mere looſe and general talk about it, and never enter into particulars; or when there are many who deny the fact, and you never concern yourſelf about their reaſons for denying it, but reſolve to believe only thoſe who affirm it.

There is yet further a fault in your partial examination of any queſtion, when you reſolve to determine it by *natural reaſon* only, where you might be aſſiſted by *ſupernatural revelation*; or when you decide the point by *ſome word or ſentence*, or *by ſome part of revelation*, without comparing it with *other parts*, which might give further light and better help to determine the meaning.

It is alſo a culpable partiality if you examine ſome *doubtful* or *pretended viſion* or *revelation without the uſe of reaſon*; or without the uſe of that *revelation*, which is undoubted and ſufficiently proved to be divine. Theſe are all inſtances of *imperfect examination*, and we ſhould

never determine a queſtion by one or two lights, where we may have the advantage of three or four.

XIII. TAKE heed leſt ſome *darling notion*, ſome *favourite hypotheſis*, ſome *beloved doctrine*, or ſome *common but unexamined opinion*, be made a *teſt of the truth or falſehood of all other propoſitions about the ſame ſubject*. Dare not build much upon ſuch a notion or doctrine till it be very fully examined, accurately adjuſted, and ſufficiently confirmed. Some perſons, by indulging ſuch a practice, have been led into long ranks of errors; they have found themſelves involved in a train of miſtakes, by taking up ſome pretty *hypotheſis* or principle, either in *philoſophy*, *politics*, or *religion*, upon ſlight and inſufficient grounds, and eſtabliſhing that as a teſt and rule by which to judge of all other things.

XIV. FOR the ſame reaſon, have a care of *ſuddenly determining any one queſtion on which the determination of any kindred or parallel caſes will eaſily* or *naturally follow*. Take heed of receiving any wrong turn in your early judgment of things; be watchful, as far as poſſible, againſt any falſe bias which may be given to the underſtanding, eſpecially in younger years. The indulgence of ſome one ſilly opinion, or the giving credit to one fooliſh fable, lays the mind open to be impoſed upon by many. The ancient *Romans* were taught to believe that *Romulus* and *Remus*, the founders of their ſtate and empire, were *expoſed in the woods, and nurſed by a wolf*: this ſtory prepared their minds for the reception of any tales of the like nature relating to other countries. *Trogus Pompeius* would enforce the belief, that *one of the ancient kings of* Spain *was alſo nurſed and ſuckled by a hart*, from the fable of *Romulus* and *Remus*. It was by the ſame influence they learned to give up their hopes and fears to *omens* and *ſoothſaying*, when they were once perſuaded that the greatneſs of their empire, and the glory of *Romulus* their founder, were predicted by the happy omen of *twelve vultures appearing to him when he ſought where to build the city*. They readily received all the following legends of *prodigies*,

auguries, and *prognoſtics*, for many ages together, with which *Livy* has furniſhed his huge hiſtory.

So the child who is once taught to believe any one occurrence to be a *good* or *evil omen*, or any day of the month or week to be *lucky* or *unlucky*, hath a wide inroad made on the ſoundneſs of his underſtanding in the following judgments of his life; he lies ever open to all the ſilly impreſſions and idle tales of nurſes, and imbibes many a fooliſh ſtory with greedineſs, which he muſt unlearn again if ever he become acquainted with truth and wiſdom.

XV. Have a care of *intereſting your warm and religious zeal* in thoſe matters which are not ſufficiently evident in themſelves, or which are not fully and thoroughly examined and proved: for this zeal, whether right or wrong, when it is once engaged, will have a powerful influence to eſtabliſh your own minds in thoſe doctrines which are really doubtful, and to ſtop up all the avenues of further light. This will bring upon the ſoul a ſort of *ſacred awe and dread of hereſy*; with a divine concern to maintain whatever opinion you have eſpouſed as divine, though perhaps you have eſpouſed it without any juſt evidence, and ought to have renounced it as falſe and pernicious.

We ought to be zealous for the moſt important points of our religion, *and to contend earneſtly for the faith once delivered to the ſaints*; but we ought not to employ this ſacred fervour of ſpirit in the ſervice of any article, till we have ſeen it made out with plain and ſtrong conviction, that it is a neceſſary or important point of faith or practice, and is either an evident dictate of the light of nature, or an aſſured article of revelation. *Zeal* muſt not reign over the *powers of our underſtanding*, but obey them: God is the God of light and truth, a God of reaſon and order, and he never requires mankind to uſe their natural faculties amiſs for the ſupport of his cauſe. Even the moſt myſterious and ſublime doctrines of revelation are not to be believed without a juſt reaſon for it; nor ſhould our pious affections be engaged in the defence of them,

till we have plain and convincing proof that they are certainly revealed, though perhaps we may never in this world attain to ſuch clear and diſtinct ideas of them as we deſire.

XVI. As a *warm zeal* ought never to be employed in the defence of any revealed truth, till our *reaſon* be well convinced of the *revelation*; ſo neither ſhould *wit and banter, jeſt and ridicule*, ever be indulged to oppoſe and aſſault any doctrines of profeſſed revelation, till *reaſon* has proved they are not really revealed: and even then theſe methods ſhould be uſed very ſeldom, and with the utmoſt caution and prudence. *Raillery* and *wit* were never made to anſwer our inquiries after truth, and to determine a queſtion of rational controverſy; though they may ſometimes be ſerviceable to expoſe to contempt thoſe inconſiſtent follies which have been firſt abundantly refuted by argument; they ſerve indeed only to cover *nonſenſe with ſhame*, when *reaſon* has firſt proved it to be *mere nonſenſe*.

It is therefore a ſilly and moſt unreaſonable *teſt* which ſome of our *Deiſts* have introduced to judge of divine revelation, viz. *To try if it will bear ridicule and laughter*. They are effectually beaten in all their combats at the *weapons of men*, that is, *reaſon* and *argument*; and it would not be unjuſt (though it is a little uncourtly) to ſay, that they would now attack our religion with the *talents of a vile animal*, that is, *grin* and *grimace*.

I cannot think that a *jeſter* or a monkey, a *droll* or a puppet, can be proper judges or deciders of controverſy. That which dreſſes up all things in diſguiſe, is not likely to lead us into any juſt ſentiments about them. *Plato* or *Socrates*, *Cæſar* or *Alexander*, might have a fool's coat clapt upon any of them, and perhaps in this diſguiſe, neither the wiſdom of the one, nor the majeſty of the other, would ſecure them from a ſneer; this treatment would never inform us whether they were *kings* or *ſlaves*, whether they were *fools* or *philoſophers*. The ſtrongeſt reaſoning, the beſt ſenſe, and the politeſt thoughts, may be ſet in a moſt ridicu-

lous light by this grinning faculty: the moſt obvious axioms of eternal truth may be dreſt in a very fooliſh form, and wrapt up in artful abſurdities by this talent; but they are truth and reaſon, and good ſenſe ſtill. *Euclid*, with all his demonſtrations, might be ſo covered and overwhelmed with banter, that a *beginner in the mathematics* might be tempted to doubt whether his theorems were true or no, and to imagine they could never be uſeful. So weaker minds might be eaſily prejudiced againſt the nobleſt principle of truth and goodneſs; and the younger part of mankind might be beat off from the belief of the moſt ſerious, the moſt rational and important points, even of natural religion, by the impudent jeſts of a profane wit. The moral duties of the civil life, as well as the articles of *Chriſtianity*, may be painted over with the colours of folly, and expoſed upon a ſtage, ſo as to ruin all ſocial and perſonal virtue among the gay and thoughtleſs part of the world.

XVII. It ſhould be obſerved alſo, that theſe very men cry out loudly againſt the uſe of all ſevere *railing* and *reproach* in debates, all *penalties* and *perſecutions* of the ſtate, in order to convince the minds and conſciences of men, and determine points of truth and error. Now I renounce theſe penal and ſmarting methods of conviction as much as they do, and yet I think ſtill theſe are every whit as wiſe, as juſt, and as good for this purpoſe, as *banter* and *ridicule*. Why ſhould *public mockery* in print, or a *merry joke* upon a ſtage, be a better teſt of truth, than ſevere *railing ſarcaſms*, and *public perſecutions* and *penalties*? Why ſhould more light be derived to the underſtanding by a *ſong* of ſcurrilous mirth, or a witty *ballad*, than there is by a rude *cudgel*? When a profeſſor of any religion is ſet up to be laughed up, I cannot ſee how this ſhould help us to judge of the truth of his faith any better than if he were ſcourged. The *jeers* of a theatre, the *pillory*, and the *whipping-poſt*, are very near a-kin. When the perſon or his opinion is made the jeſt of the mob, or

his back the ſhambles of the executioner, I think there is no more conviction in the one than in the other.

XVIII. BESIDES, ſuppoſing it is but barely poſſible that the great God ſhould reveal his mind and will to men by miracle, viſion, or inſpiration, it is a piece of *contempt* and *profane inſolence* to treat any tolerable or rational appearance of ſuch a revelation with *jeſt* and *laughter*, in order to find whether it be divine or no. And yet if this be a *proper teſt of revelation*, it may be properly applied to the *true* as well as the *falſe*, in order to diſtinguiſh it. Suppoſe a *royal proclamation* were ſent to a diſtant part of the kingdom, and ſome of the ſubjects ſhould doubt whether it came from the king or no; is it poſſible that *wit* and *ridicule* ſhould ever decide the point? Or would the prince ever think himſelf treated with juſt honour to have his proclamation canvaſſed in this manner on a public ſtage, and become the ſport of buffoons, in order to determine the queſtion, *Whether it is the word of a king or no?*

Let ſuch ſort of writers go on at their deareſt peril, and *ſport themſelves in their own deceivings*; let them at their peril make a jeſt at the Bible, and treat the ſacred articles of *Chriſtianity* with ſcoff and merriment: but then let them lay aſide all their pretences to *reaſon* as well as *religion*; and as they expoſe themſelves by ſuch writings to the neglect and contempt of men, ſo let them prepare to meet the majeſty and indignation of God without timely repentance.

XIX. IN reading *philoſophical*, *moral*, or *religious controverſies*, never raiſe your eſteem of any opinion by the aſſurance and zeal wherewith the author aſſerts it, nor by the higheſt praiſes he beſtows upon it: nor on the other hand, let your eſteem of an opinion be abated, nor your averſion to it raiſed by the ſupercilious contempt caſt upon it by a warm writer, nor by the ſovereign airs with which he condemns it. Let the force of argument alone influence your aſſent or diſſent. Take care that your ſoul be not warped or biaſſed on one ſide or the other, by any ſtrains of flattering or abuſive language; for there is no queſtion whatſoever

but hath ſome ſuch ſort of defenders and oppoſers. Leave thoſe writers to their own follies, who practiſe thus upon the weakneſs of their readers without argument: leave them to triumph in their own fancied poſſeſſions and victories: it is oftentimes found that their poſſeſſions are but a heap of errors, and their boaſted victories are but overbearing noiſe and clamour to ſilence the *voice* of truth.

In *philoſophy* and *religion* the *bigots* of all parties are generally the moſt poſitive, and deal much in this ſort of argument. Sometimes theſe are the weapons of *pride*; for a haughty man ſuppoſes all his opinions to be infallible, and imagines the contrary ſentiments are ever ridiculous, and not worthy of notice. Sometimes theſe ways of talking are the mere arms of ignorance: the men who uſe them know little of the oppoſite ſide of the queſtion, and therefore they exult in their own vain pretences to knowledge, as though no man of ſenſe could oppoſe their opinion. They rail at an objection againſt their own ſentiments, becauſe they can find no other anſwer to it but railing. And men of learning, by their exceſſive vanity, have been ſometimes tempted into the ſame inſolent practice as well as the ignorant.

Yet let it be remembered too, that there are ſome truths ſo plain and evident, that the oppoſition to them is ſtrange, unaccountable, and almoſt monſtrous: and in vindication of ſuch truths, a writer of good ſenſe may ſometimes be allowed to uſe a degree of aſſurance, and pronounce them ſtrongly with an air of confidence, while he defends them with reaſons of convincing force.

XX. Sometimes a *queſtion* may be propoſed, which is *of ſo large and extenſive a nature, and refers to ſuch a multitude of ſubjects, as ought not in juſtice to be determined at once by a ſingle argument or anſwer*: as if one ſhould aſk me, Are you a profeſſed diſciple of the *Stoics* or the *Platoniſts*? Do you receive and aſſent to the principles of *Gaſſendus*, *Deſcartes*, or Sir *Iſaac Newton*? Have you choſen the hypotheſis of *Tycho* or *Copernicus*? Have you devoted yourſelf to the ſentiments of *Armi-*

nius or *Calvin?* Are your notions *Epiſcopal*, *Preſbyterian*, or *Independent*, &c.? I think it may be very proper in ſuch caſes not to give an anſwer in the groſs, but rather to enter into a detail of particulars, and explain one's own ſentiments. Perhaps there is no man, nor ſet of men upon earth, whoſe ſentiments I entirely follow. God has given me reaſon to judge for myſelf, and though I may ſee ſufficient ground to agree to the greateſt part of the opinions of one perſon or party, yet it does by no means follow that I ſhould receive them all. Truth does not always go by the lump, nor does error tincture and ſpoil all the articles of belief that ſome one party profeſſes.

Since there are difficulties attend every ſcheme of human knowledge, it is enough for me in the main to incline to that ſide which has the feweſt difficulties; and I would endeavour, as far as poſſible, to correct the miſtakes or the harſh expreſſions of one party, by ſoftening and reconciling methods, by reducing the extremes, and by borrowing ſome of the beſt principles or phraſes from another. *Cicero* was one of the greateſt men of antiquity, and gives us an account of the various opinions of philoſophers in his age; but he himſelf was of the *Eclectic* ſect, and choſe out of each of them ſuch poſitions as in his wiſeſt judgment came neareſt to the truth.

XXI. When you are called in the courſe of life or religion to judge and determine concerning any queſtion, and to affirm or deny it, *take a full ſurvey of the objections againſt it, as well as of the arguments for it, as far as your time and circumſtances admit, and ſee on which ſide the preponderation falls.* If either the *objections* againſt any propoſition, or the *arguments* for the defence of it, carry in them moſt undoubted evidence, and are plainly unanſwerable, they will and ought to conſtrain the aſſent, though there may be many ſeeming probabilities on the other ſide, which at firſt ſight would flatter the judgment to favour it. But where the reaſons on both ſides are very near of equal weight, there *ſuſpenſion* or *doubt* is our duty, unleſs in caſes wherein preſent de-

termination or practice is required, and there we must act according to the present appearing preponderation of reasons.

XXII. *IN matters of moment and importance, it is our duty indeed to seek after certain and conclusive arguments* (if they can be found), in order to determine a question: but where the matter is of little consequence, it is not worth our labour to spend much time in seeking after *certainties*; it is sufficient here, if *probable reasons* offer themselves. And even in matters of greater importance, especially where daily practice is necessary, and where we cannot attain any *sufficient* or *certain grounds* to determine a question on either side, we must then take up with such *probable arguments* as we can arrive at. But this general rule should be observed, *viz.* to take heed that our assent be no stronger, or rise no higher in the degree of it, than the *probable argument* will support.

XXIII. THERE are many things even in *religion*, as well as in *philosophy* and *civil life*, which we believe with very *different degrees of assent*; and this is, or should be always regulated according to the different degrees of evidence which we enjoy: and perhaps there are a thousand gradations in our assent to the things we believe, because there are thousands of circumstances relating to different questions, which increase or diminish the evidence we have concerning them, and that in matters both of reason and revelation.

I believe there is a God, and that *obedience is due to him from every reasonable creature*: this I am most fully assured of, because I have the strongest evidence, since it is the plain dictate both of reason and revelation.

Again, *I believe there is a future resurrection of the dead*, because scripture tells us so in the plainest terms, though reason says nothing of it. *I believe also, that the same matter of our bodies which died* (in part at least) *shall arise*; but I am not so fully assured of this circumstance, because the revelation of it is not quite so clear and express. Yet further, *I believe that the good men who were acquainted here on earth, shall know each*

other in heaven; but my perſuaſion of it is not abſolutely certain, becauſe my aſſent to it ariſes only from circumſtantial reaſonings of men upon what God has told us, and therefore my evidences are not ſtrong beyond a poſſibility of miſtake. This direction cannot be too often repeated, that *our aſſent ought always to keep pace with our evidence;* and our belief of any propoſition ſhould never riſe higher than the proof or evidence we have to ſupport it, nor ſhould our faith run faſter than right reaſon can encourge it.

XXIV. PERHAPS it will be *objected* here, *Why then does our Saviour, in the hiſtories of the Goſpel, ſo much commend a ſtrong faith, and lay out both his miraculous benefits, and his praiſes upon ſome of thoſe poor creatures of little reaſoning, who profeſt an aſſured belief of his commiſſion and power to heal them?*

I *anſwer*, The God of nature has given every man *his own reaſon* to be the judge of evidence to himſelf in particular, and to direct his aſſent in all things about which he is called to judge; and even the matters of revelation are to be believed by us, becauſe our reaſon pronounces the revelation to be true. Therefore the great God will not, or cannot, in any inſtances, require us to aſſent to any thing without reaſonable or ſufficient evidence, nor to believe any propoſition more ſtrongly than what our evidence for it will ſupport. We have therefore abundant ground to believe, that thoſe perſons of whom our Saviour requires ſuch a *ſtrong faith*, or whom he commends for their ſtrong faith, had as ſtrong and certain evidence of his power and commiſſion from the credible and inconteſtable reports they had heard of his miracles, which were wrought on purpoſe to give evidence to his commiſſion *. Now in ſuch a caſe both this ſtrong faith

* When our Saviour gently reproves *Thomas* for his unbelief, *John* xx. 29. he does it in theſe words, *Becauſe thou haſt ſeen me, Thomas, thou haſt believed: bleſſed are they who have not ſeen, and yet have believed*, i. e. Bleſſed are they who, though they have not been favoured with the evidence of their ſenſes as thou haſt been, yet have been convinced by the reaſonable and

and the open profeſſion of it were very worthy of public encouragement and praiſe from our Saviour, becauſe of the great and public oppoſition which the magiſtrates, and the prieſts, and the doctors of the age made againſt *Jeſus* the man of *Nazareth*, when he appeared as the *Meſſiah*.

And beſides all this it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, with regard to ſome of thoſe ſtrong exerciſes of faith which are required and commended, that theſe believers had ſome further hints of inward evidence and immediate revelation from God himſelf; as when St. *Peter* confeſſes *Chriſt* to be the *Son of God*, *Matth.* xvi. 16, 17. our bleſſed Saviour commends him, ſaying, *Bleſſed art thou, Simon Bar-jona*; but he adds, *Fleſh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.*

And the ſame may be ſaid concerning the *faith of miracles*, the exerciſe whereof was ſometimes required of the diſciples and others, *i. e.* when by inward and divine influences God aſſured them ſuch miracles ſhould be wrought, their obedience to and compliance with theſe divine illuminations was expected and commended. Now this ſupernatural inſpiration carried ſufficient *evidence* with it to them, as well as to the ancient prophets, though we who never felt it are not ſo capable to judge and diſtinguiſh it.

XXV. WHAT is ſaid before concerning *truth* or *doctrines*, may be alſo affirmed concerning *duties*; the reaſon of both is the ſame; as the one are *truths for our ſpeculation*, the others are *truths for our practice*. *Duties* which are expreſsly required in the plain language of ſcripture, or dictated by the moſt evident reaſoning upon firſt principles, ought to bind our conſciences more than thoſe which are but dubiouſly inferred, and that only from occaſional occurrences, incidents, and circumſtances: as for inſtance, I am

ſufficient moral evidence of the well-grounded report of others, and have believed in me upon that evidence. Of this *moral evidence* Mr. *Ditton* writes exceedingly well, in his book of the *Reſurrection of Chriſt*.

certain that *I ought to pray to God*; my conſcience is bound to this, becauſe there are moſt evident commands for it to be found in ſcripture, as well as to be derived from reaſon. I believe alſo that I may *pray to God, either by a written form, or without one*, becauſe neither reaſon nor revelation expreſsly requires either of theſe modes of prayer at all times, or forbids the other. I cannot therefore bind my conſcience to practiſe the one ſo as utterly to renounce the other; but I would practiſe either of them as my reaſon and other circumſtances direct me.

Again, I believe *that Chriſtians ought to remember the death of* Chriſt *by the ſymbols of bread and wine:* and I believe *there ought to be paſtors in a Chriſtian church ſome way ordained or ſet apart to lead the worſhip, and to bleſs and diſtribute theſe elements*; but the laſt of theſe practices is not ſo expreſsly directed, preſcribed, and required in ſcripture as the former; and therefore I feel my conſcience evidently bound *to remember the death of Chriſt* with ſome ſociety of Chriſtians or other, ſince it is a moſt plain command, though their methods of ordaining a paſtor be very different from other men, or from my own opinion; or whether the perſon who diſtributes theſe elements be only an occaſional or a ſettled adminiſtrator; ſince none of theſe things are plainly determined in ſcripture. I muſt not omit or neglect an expreſs command, becauſe ſome unneceſſary circumſtances are dubious. And I truſt I ſhall receive approbation from the God of nature, and from *Jeſus* my Judge at the laſt day, if I have endeavoured in this manner to believe and practiſe every thing in proportion to the degree of evidence which God has given me about it, or which he has put me into a capacity to ſeek and obtain in the age and nation wherein I live.

Query, Whether the obſtinate *Deiſts*, and the *Fataliſts* of *Great Britain*, will find ſufficient apology from this principle? But I leave them to venture the awful experiment.

XXVI. We may obſerve theſe *three rules, in judging of probabilities* which are to be determined by reaſon, relating either to things paſt, or things to come.

1. That which *agrees moſt with the conſtitution of nature* carries the greateſt probability in it, where no other circumſtance appears to counterpoiſe it: as, if I let looſe a greyhound within ſight of a hare upon a large plain, there is great probability the greyhound will ſeize her; that a thouſand ſparrows will fly away at the ſight of a hawk among them.

2. That which is *moſt conformable to the conſtant obſervations of men, or to experiments frequently repeated*, is moſt likely to be true: as, that a winter will not paſs away in *England* without ſome froſt and ſnow; that if you deal out great quantities of ſtrong liquor to the mob, there will be many drunk; that a large aſſembly of men will be of different opinions in any doubtful point; that a thief will make his eſcape out of priſon, if the doors of it are unguarded at midnight.

3. In matters of fact, which are paſt or preſent, where neither nature, nor obſervation, nor cuſtom gives us any ſufficient information on either ſide of the queſtion, that we may derive a probability *from the atteſtation of wiſe and honeſt men* by word or writing, or the *concurring witneſſes of multitudes* who have ſeen and known what they relate, *&c.* This *teſtimony* in many caſes will ariſe to the degree of *moral certainty*. So we believe that the plant *tea* grows in *China*; and that the emperor of the *Turks* lives at *Conſtantinople*; that *Julius Caſar* conquered *France*, and that *Jeſus* our Saviour lived and died in *Judea*; that thouſands were converted to the *Chriſtian faith* in a century after the death of *Chriſt*; and that the *books* which contain the *Chriſtian religion*, are certain hiſtories and epiſtles which were written above a thouſand years ago. There is an infinite variety of ſuch propoſitions which can admit of no reaſonable doubt, though they are not matters which are directly evident to our own ſenſes, or our mere reaſoning powers.

XXVII. WHEN a point hath been well examined, and our own judgment ſettled upon juſt arguments in our manly age, and after a large ſurvey of the merits of the cauſe, it would be a *weakneſs for us always to continue fluttering in ſuſpenſe*. We ought therefore to ſtand firm in ſuch well-eſtabliſhed principles, and not be tempted to change and alter for the ſake of every difficulty, or every occaſional objection. We are *not to be carried about with every* flying *doctrine, like children toſſed to and fro, and wavering with the wind. It is a good thing to have the heart eſtabliſhed with grace, not with meats*; that is, in the great doctrines of the goſpel of *grace*, and in *Jeſus Chriſt*, who *is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever*; but it is not ſo neceſſary in the more minute matters of religion, ſuch as *meats* and *drinks*, *forms* and *ceremonies*, which are of leſs importance, and for which ſcripture has not given ſuch expreſs directions. This is the advice of the great Apoſtle, *Eph.* iv. 14. *Heb.* xiii. 8, 9.

In ſhort, thoſe truths which are the ſprings of daily practice, ſhould be ſettled as ſoon as we can with the exerciſe of our beſt *powers*, after the ſtate of manhood: but thoſe things wherein we may poſſibly miſtake, ſhould never be ſo abſolutely and finally eſtabliſhed and determined, as though we were infallible. If the *Papiſts* of *Great Britain* had indulged ſuch a reſolute eſtabliſhment and aſſurance in the days of king *Henry* the VIII. or queen *Elizabeth*, there never had been a reformation: nor would any *Heathen* have been converted even under the miniſtry of St. *Paul*, if their obſtinate ſettlement in their idolatries had kept their eyes ſhut againſt all further light. Yet this ſhould not hinder us from ſettling our moſt important principles of faith and practice, where reaſon ſhines with its cleareſt evidence, and the word of God plainly determines truth and duty.

XXVIII. BUT let us remember alſo, that though the goſpel be an *infallible revelation*, we are but *fallible interpreters*, when we determine the ſenſe even of ſome important propoſitions written there; and therefore

though we ſeem to be eſtabliſhed in the belief of any particular ſenſe of ſcripture, and though there may be juſt calls of providence to profeſs and ſubſcribe it, yet there is no need that we ſhould reſolve or promiſe, ſubſcribe or ſwear, never to change our mind: ſince it is poſſible in the nature and courſe of things, we may meet with ſuch a ſolid and ſubſtantial objection, as may give us a quite different view of things from what we once imagined, and may lay before us ſufficient evidence of the contrary. We may happen to find a fairer light caſt over the ſame ſcriptures, and ſee reaſon to alter our ſentiments even in ſome points of moment. *Sic ſentio, ſic ſentiam*, i. e. *So I believe, and ſo I will believe*, is the priſon of the ſoul for life-time, and a bar againſt all the improvements of the mind. To impoſe ſuch a profeſſion on other men in matters not abſolutely neceſſary, and not abſolutely certain, is a criminal uſurpation and tyranny over faith and conſcience, and none has power to require it but an infallible dictator.

CHAP. XIX.

Of inquiring into CAUSES *and* EFFECTS.

SOME effects are found out by their cauſes, and ſome cauſes by their effects. Let us conſider both theſe.

I. *WHEN we are inquiring into the cauſes of any particular effect* or *appearance*, either in the world of nature, or in the civil or moral concerns of men, we may follow this method.

1. Conſider what effects or appearances you have known of a *kindred nature*, and what have been the *certain* and *real cauſes* of them; for *like effects* have generally *like cauſes*, eſpecially when they are found in the *ſame* ſort of *ſubjects*.

2. Conſider what are the ſeveral *poſſible cauſes* which may produce ſuch an effect: and find out by ſome cir-

cumſtances, how many of thoſe poſſible cauſes are excluded in this particular caſe: thence proceed by degrees to the *probable cauſes*, till a more cloſe attention and inſpection ſhall exclude ſome of them alſo, and lead you gradually to the *real* and *certain cauſe*.

3. Conſider what *things preceded* ſuch an event or appearance, which might have any influence upon it; and though we cannot certainly determine the cauſe of any thing only from its going before the effect, yet among the many *forerunners*, we may probably light upon the true cauſe by further and more particular inquiry.

4. Conſider whether *one cauſe* be ſufficient to produce the effect, or whether it does not require a *concurrence of ſeveral cauſes*; and then endeavour as far as poſſible to adjuſt the degrees of influence that each cauſe might have in producing the effect, and the proper agency and intereſt of each of them therein.

So in *natural philoſophy*, if I would find what are the principles or cauſes of that ſenſation which we call *heat* when I ſtand near the fire; here I ſhall find it is neceſſary that there be an agency of the particles of fire on my fleſh, either mediately by themſelves, or at leaſt by the intermediate air; there muſt be a particular ſort of motion and vellication impreſt upon my nerves; there muſt be a derivation of that motion to the brain; and there muſt be an attention of my ſoul to this motion: if either of theſe are wanting, the ſenſation of *heat* will not be produced.

So in the *moral world*, if I inquire into the *revolution of a ſtate or kingdom*, perhaps I find it brought about by the tyranny or folly of a prince, or by the diſaffection of his own ſubjects; and this diſaffection and oppoſition may ariſe, either upon the account of impoſitions in religion, or injuries relating to their civil rights; or the revolution may be effected by the invaſion of a foreign army, or by the oppoſition of ſome perſon at home or abroad that lays claim to the government, *&c.* or a hero who would guard the liberties of the people; or by many of theſe concurring

together; then we must adjust the influences of each as wisely as we can, and not ascribe the whole event to one of them alone.

II. *WHEN we are inquiring into the effects of any particular cause* or *causes*, we may follow this method.

1. Consider diligently the *nature of every cause* apart, and observe what effect every part or property of it will tend to produce.

2. Consider the *causes united together* in their several natures, and ways of operation; inquire how far the powers or properties of one will hinder or promote the effects of the other, and wisely balance the proportions of their influence.

3. Consider what the *subject* is, in or upon which the cause is to operate: for the same cause on different subjects will oftentimes produce different effects, as the *sun* which softens *wax* will harden *clay*.

4. Be frequent and diligent in *making all proper experiments*; in setting such causes at work whose effects you desire to know, and putting together in an orderly manner such things as are most likely to produce some useful effects, according to the best survey you can take of all the concurring causes and circumstances.

5. *Observe* carefully all the *events* which happen either by an occasional concurrence of various causes, or by the industrious application of knowing men: and when you see any happy effect certainly produced, and often repeated, treasure it up, together with the known causes of it, amongst your improvements.

6. Take a just survey of all *the circumstances* which attend the operation of any cause or causes, whereby any special effect is produced, and find out as far as possible how far any of those circumstances had a tendency either to obstruct, or promote, or change those operations, and consequently how far the effect might be influenced by them.

In this manner *physicians* practise and improve their skill. They consider the various known effects of *particular herbs or drugs*, they meditate what will be the effect of their *composition*, and whether the virtues of

the one will exalt or diminiſh the force of the other, or correct any of its nocent qualities. Then they obſerve the native conſtitution, and the preſent temper or circumſtances of the patient, and what is likely to be the effect of ſuch a medicine on ſuch a patient. And in all uncommon caſes they make wiſe and cautious experiments, and nicely obſerve the effects of particular compound medicines on different conſtitutions, and in different diſeaſes: and by theſe treaſuries of juſt obſervations, they grow up to an honourable degree of ſkill in the *art of healing*.

So the *preacher* conſiders the *doctrines* and *reaſons*, the *precepts*, the *promiſes*, and *threatenings* of the word of God, and what are the natural effects of them upon the mind; he conſiders what is the *natural tendency of ſuch a virtue or ſuch a vice*; he is well apprized that the repreſentation of ſome of theſe things may convince the underſtanding, ſome may terrify the conſcience, ſome may allure the ſlothful, and ſome encourage the deſponding mind; he obſerves the *temper of his hearers*, or of any particular perſon that converſes with him about things ſacred, and he judges what will be the effects of each repreſentation on ſuch perſons; he reviews and recollects what have been the effects of ſome ſpecial parts and methods of his miniſtry; and by a careful ſurvey of all theſe, he attains greater degrees of ſkill in his ſacred employment.

Note, In all theſe caſes we muſt diſtinguiſh thoſe cauſes and effects which are *naturally* and *neceſſarily connected* with each other, from thoſe which have only an *accidental or contingent connexion*. Even in thoſe cauſes where the effect is but *contingent*, we may ſometimes arrive at a very high degree of probability; yet we cannot arrive at ſuch certainty as where the cauſes operate by an *evident* and *natural neceſſity*, and the effects neceſſarily follow the operation.

See more on this ſubject, *Logic*, Part II. Chap. V. Sect. 7. *Of the principles and rules of judging concerning things paſt, preſent, and to come, by the mere uſe of reaſon.*

CHAP. XX.

Of the Sciences, and their Uſe in particular Profeſſions.

I.

THE beſt way to learn any ſcience, is to begin with a regular ſyſtem, or a ſhort and plain ſcheme of that ſcience, well drawn up into a narrow compaſs, omitting the deeper and more abſtruſe parts of it, and that alſo under the conduct and inſtruction of ſome ſkilful teacher. Syſtems are neceſſary to give an entire and comprehenſive view of the ſeveral parts of any ſcience, which may have a mutual influence toward the explication or proof of each other: whereas if a man deals always and only in *eſſays* and *diſcourſes* on particular parts of a ſcience, he will never obtain a diſtinct and juſt idea of the whole, and may perhaps omit ſome important part of it, after ſeven years reading of ſuch occaſional diſcourſes.

For this reaſon, young ſtudents ſhould apply themſelves to their *ſyſtems* much more than *pamphlets*. That man is never ſo fit to judge of *particular ſubjects* relating to any ſcience, who has never taken a ſurvey of the *whole*.

It is the remark of an ingenious writer, ſhould a barbarous *Indian*, who had never ſeen a *palace* or a *ſhip*, view their ſeparate and disjointed parts, and obſerve the pillars, doors, windows, cornices, and turrets of the *one*, or the prow and ſtern, the ribs and maſts, the ropes and ſhrouds, the ſails and tackle of the *other*, he would be able to form but a very lame and dark idea of either of thoſe excellent and uſeful inventions. In like manner, thoſe who contemplate only the fragments or pieces broken off from any ſcience, diſperſed in ſhort unconnected diſcourſes, and do not diſcern their relation to each other, and how they may be adapted, and by their union procure the delightful ſymmetry of a regular ſcheme, can never ſurvey an entire body of

truth, but muſt always view it as deformed and diſmembered; while their ideas, which muſt be ever indiſtinct and often repugnant, will lie in the brain unſorted, and thrown together without order or coherence: ſuch is the knowledge of thoſe men who live upon the ſcraps of the ſciences.

A youth of genius and lively imagination, of an active and forward ſpirit, may form within himſelf ſome alluring ſcenes and pleaſing ſchemes in the beginning of a ſcience, which are utterly inconſiſtent with ſome of the neceſſary and ſubſtantial parts of it which appear in the middle or the end. And if he never read and paſs through the whole, he takes up and is ſatisfied with his own haſty pleaſing ſchemes, and treaſures theſe errors up amongſt his ſolid acquiſitions; whereas his own labour and ſtudy farther purſued would have ſhewn him his early miſtakes, and cured him of his ſelf-flattering deluſions.

Hence it comes to paſs, that we have ſo many *half-ſcholars* now-a-days, and there is ſo much confuſion and inconſiſtency in the notions and opinions of ſome perſons, becauſe they devote their hours of ſtudy entirely to ſhort *eſſays* and *pamphlets*, and caſt contempt upon *ſyſtems*, under a pretence of greater politeneſs; whereas the true reaſon of this contempt of ſyſtematical learning, is mere lazineſs and want of judgment.

II. After we are grown well acquainted with a *ſhort ſyſtem* or *compendium* of a ſcience, which is written in the plaineſt and moſt ſimple manner, *it is then proper to read a larger regular treatiſe on that ſubject*, if we deſign a complete knowledge and cultivation of it: and either while we are reading this *larger ſyſtem*, or after we have done it, the *occaſional diſcourſes* and *eſſays* upon the particular ſubjects and parts of that ſcience may be read with the greateſt profit: for in theſe *eſſays* we may often find very conſiderable corrections and improvements of what theſe *compends*, or even the *larger ſyſtems* may have taught us, mingled with ſome miſtakes.

And theſe corrections or improvements ſhould be as remarks adjoined by way of note or commentary in

their proper places, and ſuperadded to the regular treatiſe we have read. Then a ſtudious and judicious review of the whole will give us a tolerable acquaintance with that ſcience.

III. *'Tis a great happineſs to have ſuch a tutor, or ſuch friends and companions at hand,* who are able to inform us what are the beſt books written on any ſcience, or any ſpecial part of it. For want of this advantage many a man has waſted his time in reading over perhaps ſome whole volumes, and learnt little more by it than to know, that thoſe volumes were not worth his reading.

IV. As for the *languages, they are certainly beſt learned in the younger years of life.* The memory is then moſt empty and unfurniſhed, and ready to receive new ideas continually. We find that children in two years time after they are born, learn to ſpeak their native tongue.

V. *THE more abſtracted ſciences,* which depend more upon the underſtanding and judgment, and which deal much in abſtracted ideas, *ſhould not be impoſed upon* children *too ſoon;* ſuch are *logic, metaphyſics, ethics, politics,* or the depths and difficulties of *grammar* and *criticiſm.* Yet it muſt be confeſſed, the firſt rudiments of *grammar* are neceſſary, or at leaſt very convenient to be known when a youth learns a new language; and ſome general eaſy principles and rules of morality and divinity are needful, in order to teach a child his duty to God and man; but to enter far into abſtracted reaſonings on theſe ſubjects is beyond the capacity of children.

VI. THERE are *ſeveral of the ſciences that will more agreeably employ our younger years,* and the general parts of them may be eaſily taken in by boys. The firſt principles and eaſier practices of *arithmetic, geometry, plain trigonometry, meaſuring heights, depths, lengths, diſtances,* &c. The rudiments of *geography* and *aſtronomy,* together with ſomething of *mechanics,* may be eaſily conveyed into the minds of acute young perſons, from nine or ten years old and upward. Theſe ſtudies may be entertaining and uſeful to young ladies as well as to gentlemen, and to all thoſe who are bred up to the

learned profeſſions. The *fair ſex* may intermingle thoſe with the operations of the needle, and the knowledge of domeſtic life. *Boys* may be taught to join them with their rudiments of *grammar*, and their labour in the languages. And even thoſe who never learn any language but their mother-tongue, may be taught theſe ſciences with laſting benefit in early days.

That this may be done with eaſe and advantage, take theſe three reaſons.

(1.) Becauſe they depend ſo much upon ſchemes and numbers, images, lines, and figures, and ſenſible things, that the imagination or fancy will greatly aſſiſt the underſtanding, and render the knowledge of them much more eaſy.

(2.) Theſe ſtudies are ſo pleaſant, that they will make the dry labour of learning words, phraſes, and languages more tolerable to boys in a *Latin* ſchool by this moſt agreeable mixture. The employment of youth in theſe ſtudies will tempt them to neglect many of the fooliſh plays of childhood, and they will find ſweeter entertainment for themſelves and their leiſure hours, by a cultivation of theſe pretty pieces of alluring knowledge.

(3.) The knowledge of theſe parts of ſcience are both eaſy and worthy to be retained in memory by all children when they come to manly years, for they are uſeful through all the parts of human life: they tend to enlarge the underſtanding early, and to give a various acquaintance with uſeful ſubjects by times. And ſurely it is beſt, as far as poſſible, to train up children in the knowledge of thoſe things which they ſhould never forget, rather than to let them waſte years of life in trifles, or in hard words which are not worth remembering.

And here by the way I cannot but wonder, that any author in our age ſhould have attempted to teach any of the exploded *phyſics* of *Deſcartes*, or the nobler inventions of Sir *Iſaac Newton*, in his hypotheſis of the heavenly bodies and their motions, in his doctrine of light and colours, and other parts of his *phyſiology*,

or to inſtruct children in the knowledge of the theory of the heavens, earth, and planets, without any *figures* or *diagrams*. Is it poſſible to give a boy or a young lady the clear, diſtinct, and proper apprehenſions of theſe things, without lines and figures to deſcribe them? Does not their underſtanding want the aid of fancy and images to convey ſtronger and juſter ideas of them to the inmoſt ſoul: or do they imagine that youth can penetrate into all theſe beauties and artifices of nature without theſe helps which perſons of maturer age find neceſſary for that purpoſe? I would not willingly name the books, becauſe ſome of the writers are ſaid to be gentlemen of excellent acquirements.

VII. After we have firſt learnt and gone through any of thoſe arts or ſciences which are to be explained by diagrams, figures, and ſchemes, ſuch as *geometry*, *geography*, *aſtronomy*, *optics*, *mechanics*, &c. we may beſt *preſerve them in memory*, *by having thoſe ſchemes* and *figures* in large ſheets of paper, *hanging always before the eye* in cloſets, parlours, halls, chambers, entries, ſtair-caſes, *&c.* Thus the learned images will be perpetually impreſt on the brain, and will keep the learning that depends upon them alive and freſh in the mind through the growing years of life: the mere diagrams and figures will ever recal to our thoughts thoſe theorems, problems, and corollaries which have been demonſtrated by them.

It is incredible how much *geography* may be learnt this way by the two terreſtrial hemiſpheres, and by particular maps and charts of the *coaſts* and *countries* of the earth, happily diſpoſed round about us. Thus we may learn alſo the *conſtellations*, by juſt projections of the celeſtial ſphere, hung up in the ſame manner. And I muſt confeſs, for the bulk of learners of *aſtronomy*, I like that projection of the ſtars beſt, which includes in it all the ſtars in our horizon, and therefore it reaches to the 38½ degree of *ſouthern latitude*, though its centre is the *north-pole*. This gives us a better view of the heavenly bodies, as they appear every night to

us, and it may be made uſe of with a little inſtruction, and with eaſe, to ſerve for a *nocturnal*, and ſhew the true hour of the night.

But remember, that if there be any colouring upon theſe maps or projections, it ſhould be laid on ſo thin as not to obſcure or conceal any part of the lines, figures, or letters: whereas moſt times they are daubed ſo thick with gay and glaring colours, and hung up ſo high above the reach of the eye that ſhould ſurvey and read them, as though their only deſign were to make a gaudy ſhow upon the wall, and they hung there merely to cover the naked plaſter or wainſcot.

Thoſe ſciences which may be drawn out into tables, may alſo be thus hung up and diſpoſed in proper places, ſuch as, *brief abſtracts of hiſtory*, *chronology*, &c. and indeed the ſchemes of any of the arts or ſciences may be analyſed in a ſort of *ſkeleton*, and repreſented upon tables, with the various dependencies and connexions of their ſeveral parts and ſubjects that belong to them. Mr. *Solomon Lowe* has happily thrown the *grammar* of ſeveral languages into ſuch tables; and a frequent review of theſe *abſtracts* and *epitomes* would tend much to imprint them on the brain, when they have been once well learned; this would keep thoſe learned traces always open, and aſſiſt the weakneſs of a labouring memory. In this manner may a ſcheme of the *ſcripture hiſtory* be drawn out, and perpetuate thoſe ideas in the mind with which our daily reading furniſhes us.

VIII. EVERY man who pretends to the character of a *ſcholar*, ſhould attain *ſome general and ſuperficial idea of moſt or all the ſciences*: for there is a certain connexion among the various parts of human knowledge, ſo that ſome notions borrowed from any one ſcience may aſſiſt our acquaintance with any other, either by way of *explication*, *illuſtration*, or *proof*: though there are ſome ſciences conjoined by a much nearer affinity than others.

IX. *LET thoſe parts of every ſcience* be chiefly ſtudied at firſt, and reviewed afterward, *which have a*

more direct tendency to aſſiſt our proper profeſſion, as men, or *our general profeſſion, as Chriſtians,* always obſerving what we ourſelves have found moſt neceſſary and uſeful to us in the courſe of our lives. Age and experience will teach us to judge which of the ſciences, and which parts of them, have been of greateſt uſe, and are moſt valuable; but in younger years of life we are not ſufficient judges of this matter, and therefore ſhould ſeek advice from others who are elder.

X. THERE are three learned profeſſions among us, viz. *divinity, law,* and *medicine.* Though every man who pretends to be a ſcholar or a gentleman ſhould ſo far acquaint himſelf with a ſuperficial ſcheme of all the ſciences, as not to ſtand amazed like a mere ſtranger at the mention of the common ſubjects that belong to them; yet there is no neceſſity for every man of learning to enter into their difficulties and deep receſſes, nor to climb the heights to which ſome others have arrived. The knowledge of them in a proper meaſure may be happily uſeful to every profeſſion, not only becauſe all arts and ſciences have a ſort of communion and connexion with each other, but it is an angelic pleaſure to grow in knowledge, it is a matter of honour and eſteem, and renders a man more agreeable and acceptable in every company.

But let us ſurvey ſeveral of them more particularly, with regard to the learned profeſſions: and firſt of the *mathematics.*

XI. THOUGH I have ſo often commended *mathematical ſtudies,* and particularly the ſpeculations of *arithmetic* and *geometry,* as a means to fix a wavering mind, to beget an habit of attention, and to improve the faculty of reaſon; yet I would by no means be underſtood to recommend to all a purſuit of theſe ſciences, to thoſe extenſive lengths to which the moderns have advanced them. This is neither neceſſary nor proper for any ſtudents, but thoſe few who ſhall make theſe ſtudies their chief profeſſion and buſineſs of life, or thoſe gentlemen whoſe capacities and turn of mind are

fuited to theſe ſtudies, and have all manner of advantage to improve in them.

The general principles of *arithmetic*, *algebra*, *geometry*, and *trigonometry*, of *geography*, of modern *aſtronomy*, *mechanics*, *ſtatics*, and *optics*, have their valuable and excellent uſes, not only for the exerciſe and improvement of the faculties of the mind, but the ſubjects themſelves are very well worth our knowledge in a moderate degree, and are often made of admirable ſervice in human life. So much of theſe ſubjects as Dr. *Wells* has given us in his three volumes, entitled, *The Young Gentleman's Mathematics*, is richly ſufficient for the greateſt part of ſcholars or gentlemen; though perhaps there may be ſome ſingle treatiſes, at leaſt on ſome of theſe ſubjects, which may be better written and more uſeful to be peruſed than thoſe of that learned author.

But a penetration into the abſtruſe difficulties and depths of modern *algebra* and *fluxions*, the various *methods of quadratures*, the *menſuration* of all manner of *curves*, and their mutual *transformation*, and twenty other things that ſome modern *mathematicians deal in*, are not worth the labour of thoſe who deſign either of the three learned profeſſions, *divinity*, *law*, or *phyſic*, as the buſineſs of life. This is the ſentence of a conſiderable man, *viz.* Dr. *George Cheyne*, who was a very good proficient and writer on theſe ſubjects: he affirms, that they are but barren and airy ſtudies for a man entirely to live upon, and that for a man to indulge and riot in theſe exquiſitely bewitching contemplations is only proper for public profeſſors, or for gentlemen of eſtates, who have a ſtrong propenſity this way, and a genius fit to cultivate them.

But, ſays he, to own a great but grievous truth, though they may quicken and ſharpen the invention, ſtrengthen and extend the imagination, improve and refine the reaſoning faculty, and are of uſe both in the neceſſary and the luxurious refinement of *mechanical* arts; yet having no tendency to rectify the will, to ſweeten the temper, or mend the heart, they often

leave a ſtiffneſs, a poſitiveneſs and ſufficiency on weak minds, which is much more pernicious to ſociety, and to the intereſts of the great end of our being, than all their advantages can recompenſe. He adds further, concerning the launching into the depth of theſe ſtudies, that they are apt to beget a ſecret and refined pride, and over-weening and over-bearing vanity, the moſt oppoſite temper to the true ſpirit of the goſpel. This tempts them to preſume on a kind of omniſcience in reſpect to their fellow-creatures, who have not riſen to their elevation; nor are they fit to be truſted in the hands of any but thoſe who have acquired a humble heart, a lowly ſpirit, and a ſober and teachable temper. See Dr. *Cheyne*'s preface to his *Eſſay on Health and long Life.*

XII. Some of the practical parts of *geometry, aſtronomy, dialling, optics, ſtatics, mechanics,* &c. may be agreeable entertainments and amuſements to ſtudents in every profeſſion at leiſure hours, if they enjoy ſuch circumſtances of life as to furniſh them with conveniences for this ſort of improvement: but let them take great care leſt they entrench upon more neceſſary employments, and ſo fall under the charge and cenſure of waſted time.

Yet I cannot help making this obſervation, that where ſtudents, or indeed any young gentlemen, have in their early years made themſelves maſters of a variety of elegant problems in the *mathematic* circle of knowledge, and gained the moſt eaſy, neat, and entertaining experiments in *natural philoſophy*, with ſome ſhort and agreeable ſpeculations or practices in any *other of the arts or ſciences*, they have hereby laid a foundation for the eſteem and love of mankind among thoſe with whom they converſe, in higher or lower ranks of life; they have been often guarded by this means from the temptation of nocent pleaſures, and have ſecured both their own hours and the hours of their companions from running to waſte in ſauntering and trifles, and from a thouſand impertinencies in filly dialogues. Gaming and drinking, and many criminal and fooliſh

ſcenes of talk and action, have been prevented by theſe innocent and improving elegancies of knowledge.

XIII. HISTORY is a neceſſary ſtudy in the ſupreme place for gentlemen who deal in *politics*. The government of nations, and diſtreſsful and deſolating events which have in all ages attended the miſtakes of politicians, ſhould be ever preſent on their minds, to warn them to avoid the like conduct. *Geography* and *chronology*, which preciſely informs us of the *place* and *time* where ſuch tranſactions or events happened, are the eyes of *hiſtory*, and of abſolute neceſſity in ſome meaſure to attend it.

But *hiſtory*, ſo far as relates to the affairs of the Bible, is as neceſſary to divines as to gentlemen of any profeſſion. It helps us to reconcile many difficulties in ſcripture, and demonſtrates a divine providence. Dr. *Prideaux's Connexion of the Old and New Teſtament* is an excellent treatiſe of this kind.

XIV. AMONG the ſmaller hiſtories, *biography*, or the memoirs of the lives of great and good men, has a high rank in my eſteem, as worthy of the peruſal of every perſon who devotes himſelf to the ſtudy of *divinity*. Therein we frequently find our holy religion reduced to practice, and many parts of Chriſtianity ſhining with a tranſcendent and exemplary light. We learn there how deeply ſenſible great and good men have been of the ruins of human nature by the firſt apoſtacy from God, and how they have toiled and laboured, and turned themſelves on all ſides, to ſeek a recovery in vain, till they have found the *goſpel of Chriſt* an all-ſufficient relief. We are there furniſhed with effectual and unanſwerable evidences that the *religion of Jeſus*, with all its ſelf-denials, virtues, and devotions, is a very practicable thing, ſince it has been carried to ſuch a degree of honour by ſome wiſe and holy men. We have been there aſſured, that the pleaſures and ſatisfactions of the *Chriſtian life*, in its preſent practice and its future hopes, are not the mere raptures of fancy and enthuſiaſm, when ſome of the ſtricteſt

professors of reason have added the sanction of their testimony.

In short, the *lives* or *memoirs* of persons of piety well written, have been of infinite and unspeakable advantage to the disciples and professors of Christianity, and have given us admirable instances and rules how to resist every temptation of a soothing or a frowning world, how to practise important and difficult duties, how to love God above all, and to love our neighbours as ourselves, to live by the faith of the Son of God, and to die in the same faith, in sure and certain hope of a resurrection to eternal life.

XV. Remember that *logic* and *ontology* or *metaphysics* are necessary sciences, though they have been greatly abused by scholastic writers who have professed to teach them in former ages. Not only all *students*, whether they design the profession of *theology*, *law*, or *physic*, but all *gentlemen*, should at least acquire a superficial knowledge of them. The introduction of so many subtilties, nice distinctions, and insignificant terms, without clear ideas, has brought a great part of the *logic* and *metaphysics* of the schools into just contempt. Their *logic* has appeared the mere art of wrangling, and their *metaphysics* the skill of splitting an hair, of distinguishing without a difference, and of putting long hard names upon common things, and sometimes upon a confused jumble of things which have no clear ideas belonging to them.

It is certain that an unknown heap of trifles and impertinencies have been intermingled with these useful parts of learning, upon which account many persons in this polite age have made it a part of their breeding to throw a jest upon them; and to rally them well, has been esteemed a more valuable talent than to understand them.

But this is running into wide extremes; nor ought these parts of science to be abandoned by the *wise*, because some writers of former ages have played the fool with them. *True logic* teaches us to use our reason well, and brings a light into the understanding: *true me-*

taphyſics or *ontology*, caſts a light upon all the objects of thought and meditation, by ranging every being with all the abſolute and relative perfections and properties, modes and attendants of it in proper ranks or claſſes, and thereby it diſcovers the various relations of things to each other, and what are their general or ſpecial differences from each other, wherein a great part of human knowledge conſiſts. And by this means it greatly conduces to inſtruct us in *method*, or the diſpoſition of every thing into its proper rank and claſs of beings, attributes, or actions.

XVI. If I were to ſay any thing of *natural philoſophy*, I would venture to lay down my ſentiments thus.

I think it muſt needs be very uſeful to a *divine* to underſtand ſomething of *natural ſcience*. The mere natural hiſtory of *birds*, *beaſts*, and *fiſhes*, of *inſects*, *trees*, and *plants*, as well as of *meteors*, ſuch as *clouds*, *thunders*, *lightnings*, *ſnow*, *hail*, *froſt*, &c. in all their common or uncommon appearances, may be of conſiderable uſe to one who ſtudies *divinity*, to give him a wider and more delightful view of the works of God, and to furniſh him with lively and happy images and metaphors drawn from the large volume of nature, to diſplay and repreſent the things of God and religion in the moſt beautiful and affecting colours.

And if the mere *hiſtory* of theſe things be uſeful for this purpoſe, ſurely it will be of further advantage to be led into the *reaſons*, *cauſes*, and *effects* of theſe natural objects and appearances, and to know the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, matter, and motion, whereby the great God carries on his extenſive works of providence from the creation to this day.

I confeſs the old *Ariſtotelean* ſcheme of this ſcience will teach us very little that is worth the knowing about theſe matters: but the later writers, who have explained nature and its operations in a more ſenſible and geometrical manner, are well worth the moderate ſtudy of a divine; eſpecially thoſe who have followed the principles of that wonder of our age and nation, Sir *Iſaac Newton*. There is much pleaſure and entertainment,

as well as real profit, to be derived from thoſe admirable improvements which have been advanced in *natural philoſophy* in late years by the aſſiſtance of *mathematical* learning, as well as from the multitude of *experiments* which have been made, and are ſtill making, in natural ſubjects.

XVII. This is a ſcience which indeed eminently belongs to the *phyſician*: he ought to know all the parts of *human nature*, what are the ſound and healthy functions of an animal body, and what are the diſtempers and dangers which attend it; he ſhould alſo be furniſhed with a large knowledge of *plants* and *minerals*, and every thing which makes up the *materia medica*, or the ingredients of which medicines are made; and many other things in natural philoſophy are ſubſervient to his profeſſion, as well as to the kindred art of *ſurgery*.

XVIII. Queſtions about the *powers and operations of nature* may alſo ſometimes come into the *lawyer's* cognizance, eſpecially ſuch as relate to aſſaults, wounds, murders, *&c.* I remember I have read a trial of a man for *murder by drowning*, wherein the judge on the bench heard ſeveral arguments concerning the lungs being filled or not filled with water, by inſpiration or expiration, &c. to all which he profeſſed himſelf ſo much a ſtranger, as did not do him any great honour in public.

XIX. But I think no *divine*, who can obtain it, ſhould be utterly deſtitute of this knowledge. By the aſſiſtance of this ſtudy, he will be better able to ſurvey the various monuments of creating wiſdom in the heavens, the earth, and the ſeas, with wonder and worſhip: and by the uſe of a moderate ſkill in this ſcience, he may communicate ſo much of the aſtoniſhing works of God in the formation and government of this viſible world, and ſo far inſtruct many of his hearers, as may aſſiſt the tranſfuſion of the ſame ideas into their minds, and raiſe them to the ſame delightful exerciſes of devotion. *O Lord, how manifold are thy*

works? In wiſdom haſt thou made them all! They are ſought out by all that have pleaſure in them.

Beſides, it is worthy of the notice of every ſtudent in *theology*, that he ought to have ſome acquaintance with the *principles of nature*, that he may judge a little how far they will go; ſo that he may not be impoſed upon to take every ſtrange appearance in nature for a *miracle*, that he may reaſon the clearer upon this ſubject, that he may better confirm the miracles of *Moſes* and of *Chriſt*, nor yield up his faith to any pretences of *prodigy* and *wonder*, which are either the occaſional and uncommon operations of the elements, or the crafty ſleights of men well ſkilled in philoſophy and mechanical operations to delude the ſimple.

XX. The knowledge alſo of *animal nature*, and of the *rational ſoul of man*, and the mutual influence of theſe two ingredients of our compoſition upon each other, is worthy the ſtudy of a *divine*. It is of great importance to perſons of this character and office, to judge how far the animal powers have influence upon ſuch and ſuch particular appearances and practices of mankind; how far the appetites or paſſions of human nature are owing to the fleſh and blood, or to the mind; how far they may be moderated, and how far they ought to be ſubdued; and what are the happieſt methods of obtaining theſe ends. By this ſcience alſo we may be better informed, how far theſe paſſions or appetites are lawful, and how far they are criminal, by conſidering how far they are ſubject to the power of the will, and how far they may be changed and corrected by our watchfulneſs, care, and diligence.

It comes alſo very properly under the cognizance of this profeſſion, to be able in ſome meaſure to determine queſtions which may ariſe relating to real *inſpiration* or *prophecy*, to wild *enthuſiaſm*, to fits of a *convulſive* kind, to *melancholy* or *phrenzy*, &c. and what directions are proper to be given concerning any appearances of this nature.

XXI. Next to the knowledge of *natural things*, and acquaintance with the *human nature* and *conſtitution*,

which is made up of ſoul and body, I think *natural religion* properly takes its place. This conſiſts of theſe two parts, *viz.* (1.) The *ſpeculative* or *contemplative*, which is the *knowledge of God* in his various perfections, and in his relations to his rational creatures, ſo far as may be known by the light of nature, which heretofore uſed to be called the *ſecond part of metaphyſics*. It includes alſo (2.) That which is *practical* or *active*, which is the *knowledge of the ſeveral duties* which ariſe from our relation to God, and our relation to our fellow-creatures, and the proper conduct and government of ourſelves; this has been uſed to be called *ethics*, or *moral philoſophy*.

XXII. The knowledge of theſe things is proper for all men of learning; not only becauſe it teaches them to obtain juſter views of the ſeveral parts of *revealed religion* and of *Chriſtianity*, which are built upon them, but becauſe every branch of natural religion and of moral duty is contained, and neceſſarily implied, in all the revealed religions that ever God preſcribed to the world. We may well ſuſpect that religion does not come from God which renounces any part of natural duty.

Whether mankind live under the diſpenſation of the *patriarchs*, or of *Moſes*, or the *prophets*, or of our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*, ſtill we are bound to know the one true God, and to practiſe all that adoration and reverence, all that love to him, that faith in his perfections, with that obedience and ſubmiſſion to his will, which *natural religion requires*. We are ſtill bound to exerciſe that juſtice, truth, and goodneſs towards our neighbours, that reſtraint and moderation of our own appetites and paſſions, and that regular behaviour towards ourſelves and all our fellow-creatures around us, which *moral philoſophy* teaches. There is no ſort of revealed religion that will diſpenſe with theſe natural obligations: and a happy acquaintance with the ſeveral appetites, inclinations, and paſſions of human nature, and the beſt methods to rule and reſtrain, to direct and govern them, are our conſtant buſineſs, and ought to be our everlaſting ſtudy.

Yet I would lay down this *caution, viz.* That ſince ſtudents are inſtructed in the *knowledge of the true God* in their lectures on *Chriſtianity*, and ſince among the *Chriſtian* duties they are alſo taught all the *moral dictates* of the light of nature, or a complete ſcheme of *ethics*, there is no abſolute neceſſity of learning theſe two parts of *natural* religion, as diſtinct ſciences, ſeparate and by themſelves: but ſtill it is of great importance for a tutor, while he is reading to his pupils theſe parts of the *Chriſtian* religion, to give them notice *how far* the light of nature or mere reaſon will inſtruct us in theſe doctrines and duties, and *how far* we are obliged to divine revelation and ſcripture, for clearing up and eſtabliſhing the firm foundations of the one, for affording us ſuperior motives and powers to practiſe the other, for raiſing them to more exalted degrees, and building ſo glorious a ſuperſtructure upon them.

XXIII. The ſtudy of *natural religion, viz.* the knowledge of God and the rules of virtue and piety, as far as they are diſcovered by the light of nature, is needful indeed to prove the truth of *divine revelation* or *ſcripture*, in the moſt effectual manner: but after the divine authority of ſcripture is eſtabliſhed, that will be a very ſufficient ſpring from whence the bulk of mankind may derive their knowledge of *divinity*, or the *Chriſtian religion*, in order to their own preſent faith and practice, and their future and eternal happineſs. In this ſenſe *theology* is a ſcience neceſſary for every one that hopes for the favour of God, and the felicity of another world; and it is of infinitely more importance than any of the arts and ſciences which belong to the learned profeſſions here on earth.

XXIV. Perhaps it will be thought neceſſary I ſhould ſay ſomething concerning the ſtudy of the *civil law*, or the law of nature and nations.

If we would ſpeak with great juſtneſs and propriety, the *civil law* ſignifies the peculiar law of each ſtate, country, or city: but what we now-a-days uſually mean by the *civil law*, is a body of laws compoſed out of the beſt of the *Roman* and *Grecian* laws, and which was in

the main received and observed through all the *Roman* dominions for above twelve hundred years.

The *Romans* took the first grounds of this law from what they call *the twelve tables*, which were the abridgments of the laws of *Solon* at *Athens*, and of other cities in *Greece*, famous for knowledge and wisdom; to which they added their own ancient customs of the city of *Rome*, and the laws which were made there. These written laws were subject to various interpretations, whence controversies daily arising, they were determined by the judgment of the learned; and these determinations were what they first called *Jus Civile*. All this by degrees grew to a vast number of volumes; and therefore the emperor *Justinian* commanded his chancellor *Tribonian* to reduce them to a perfect body, and this is called *the body of the civil law*.

XXV. But that which is of most importance for all learned men to be acquainted with is the *law of nature*, or the knowledge of right and wrong among mankind, whether it be transacted between single persons or communities, so far as common reason and the light of nature dictate and direct. This is what *Pufendorff* calls the *law of nature and nations*, as will appear if you consult Sect. 3. Chap. III. of the most valuable *folio* he has written on that subject; which is well worthy the study of every man of learning, particularly *lawyers* and *divines*, together with other treatises on the same theme.

If any question proposed relate to right, and property, and justice between man and man, in any polite and civilized country, though it must be adjudged chiefly according to the particular statutes and laws of that country, yet the knowledge of the *law of nature* will very considerably assist the *lawyer* and the civil *judge* in the determination thereof. And this knowledge will be of great use to *divines*, not only in deciding of cases of conscience among men, and answering any difficult inquiries which may be proposed to them on this subject, but it will greatly assist them also in their studies relating to the law of God, and the performance

or violation thereof, the nature of duty and ſin, reward and puniſhment.

XXVI. I HAVE ſpoken ſomething of the *languages* before, but let me here reſume the ſubject, and put in a few thoughts about thoſe ſtudies which are wont to be called *philological*; ſuch as *hiſtory*, *languages*, *grammar*, *rhetoric*, *poeſy*, and *criticiſm*.

An acquaintance with ſome of the *learned languages* at leaſt, is neceſſary for all the three learned profeſſions.

XXVII. THE *lawyers*, who have the leaſt need of foreign tongues, ought to underſtand *Latin*. During many ages paſt, very important matters in the *law* were always written and managed in that language by the *lawyers*, as preſcriptions in medicine by the *phyſicians*, and citations of the ſcriptures in divinity were always made in *Latin* by the *divines*. Prayers alſo were ordained to be ſaid publicly and privately in the *Roman* tongue: *pater-noſters* and *ave-marias* were half the devotion of thoſe ages. Theſe cruel impoſitions upon the people would not ſuffer them to read in their own mother-tongue what was done, either to or for their own *ſouls*, their *bodies*, or their *eſtates*. I am ready to ſuſpect this was all owing to the craft and policy of the prieſthood and church of Rome, which endeavoured to aggrandize themſelves, and exalt their own profeſſion into a ſovereign tyranny, and to make mere ſlaves of the *laity* among mankind, by keeping them in utter ignorance, darkneſs, and dependence. And they were willing to compound the matter with the *phyſicians* and the *lawyers*, and allow them a ſmall ſhare in this tyranny over the populace, to maintain their own ſupreme dominion over all.

But we thank God the world is grown ſomething wiſer; and of late years the *Britiſh Parliament* has been pleaſed to give relief from that bondage in matters relating to the *law* alſo, as in the age of the Reformation we were delivered from ſaying our prayers in *Latin*, from being bound to read the word of God in a tongue unknown to the people, and from living

in an everlaſting ſubjection to the clergy in matters of this life, and the life to come.

But to return: There are ſtill ſo many forms of proceedings in judicature, and things called by *Latin* names in the profeſſion of the law, and ſo many barbarous words with *Latin* terminations, that it is neceſſary *lawyers* ſhould underſtand this language. Some acquaintance alſo with the old *French* tongue is needful for the ſame perſons and profeſſion, ſince the tenures of *Lyttleton*, which are a ſort of Bible to the gentlemen of the long robe, were written in that language: and this tongue has been interwoven in ſome forms of the *Engliſh* law, from the days of *William* the Conqueror, who came from *Normandy* in *France*.

XXVIII. *PHYSICIANS* ſhould be ſkilled in the *Greek* as well as in the *Latin*, becauſe their great maſter *Hippocrates* wrote in that tongue, and his writings are ſtill of good value and uſe. A multitude of the names, both of the parts of the body, of diſeaſes, and of medicines, are derived from the *Greek* language: and there are many excellent books of *phyſic*, both in the theoretical and practical parts of it, which are delivered to the world in the *Roman* tongue, and of which that profeſſion ſhould not be ignorant.

XXIX. SUCH as intend the ſtudy of *theology*, ſhould be well acquainted alſo with the *Latin*, becauſe it has been for many hundred years the language of the ſchools of learning: their diſputations are generally limited to that language, and many and excellent books of divinity muſt be entirely concealed from the ſtudents, unleſs they are acquainted with *Latin* authors.

But thoſe that deſign the ſacred profeſſion of *theology*, ſhould make it their labour of chief importance to be very converſant with their Bibles, both in the Old and New Teſtament: and this requires ſome knowledge of thoſe original languages, *Greek* and *Hebrew*, in which the Scriptures were written. All that will purſue theſe ſtudies with honour, ſhould be able to read the Old Teſtament tolerably in the *Hebrew* tongue: at leaſt they ſhould be ſo far acquainted with it, as to

find out the ſenſe of a text by the help of a dictionary. But ſcarce any man ſhould be thought worthy of the name of a ſolid divine, or a ſkilful teacher of the goſpel in theſe days of light and liberty, unleſs he has pretty good knowledge of the *Greek*, ſince all the important points of the *Chriſtian* religion are derived from the *New Teſtament*, which was firſt written in that language.

XXX. As for the *Syriac* and *Arabic* tongues, if one divine in thirty, or in three hundred, travel far into theſe regions, it is enough. A few learned men ſkilled in theſe languages, will make ſufficient remarks upon them for the ſervice of the whole *Chriſtian* world; which remarks may ſometimes happen to be of uſe to thoſe *divines* who are unacquainted with them, in reading the Bible. But the advantage of theſe tongues is not of ſo great importance as it has been too often repreſented. My reader will agree with me, when he conſiders that the chief *uſes* of them are theſe.

The *Arabic* is a language which has ſome kindred and affinity to the *Hebrew*, and perhaps we may now and then gueſs at the ſenſe of ſome uncommon and doubtful *Hebrew* word, which is found but once or twice in the Bible, by its ſuppoſed affinity to the *Arabic*: but whatſoever conjectures may be made by ſome kindred of a *Hebrew* word to an *Arabic* root, yet there is no certainty to be gathered from it; for even words of the ſame language, which are undoubtedly derived from the ſame theme or primitive, will give us but very doubtful and ſorry information concerning the true ſenſe of kindred words which ſpring from the ſame theme.

Let me give a plain inſtance or two of this uncertainty. The word *ſtrages* ſignifies *ſlaughter*; *ſtratum* is *Latin* for a *bed*; *ſtramen* is *ſtraw*; and *ſtragulum* is a *quilt* or coverlet: they are all drawn and derived from *ſterno*, which ſignifies to *throw down*, to *kill*, or to *ſpread abroad*. Let the critics tell me what certain ſenſe they could put upon either of theſe four words by their mere cognation with each other, or their de-

rivation from one common verb. Again, who could tell me the certain meaning and preciſe idea of the word *honeſt* in *Engliſh*, and aſſure me that it ſignifies a *man of integrity, juſtice*, and *probity*, though it is evidently derived from *honeſtus* in *Latin*? Whereas *honeſtus* hath a very different idea, and ſignifies *a man of ſome figure in the world*, or *a man of honour*. Let any man judge then how little ſervice toward explaining the *Hebrew* tongue can be furniſhed from all the language of *Arabia*. Surely a great part of the long learned fatigues and tireſome travels of men through this country, is almoſt vain and uſeleſs to make the *Hebrew* Bible better underſtood.

As for the *Syriac* language, it is granted there may be ſome ſmall advantage drawn from the knowledge of it, becauſe there is a very ancient tranſlation of the *New Teſtament* in that tongue: and perhaps this may ſometimes give a proper and appoſite meaning to a difficult and doubtful text, and offer a fair hint for recovering the true meaning of the Scripture from the perverſe gloſſes of other writers. But there are ſeveral commentators and *lexicographers* who have been acquainted with the *Syriac* language, and have given us the chief of theſe hints in their writings on Scripture.

And after all, ſince none of theſe aſſiſtances can yield us a ſufficient proof of a true interpretation, and give us the certain ſenſe of a text, who would be perſuaded to waſte any great number of his better hours in ſuch dry ſtudies, and in labours of ſo little profit?

XXXI. The *Chaldean* language indeed is much nearer to the *Hebrew*, and it is proper for a *divine* to have ſome acquaintance with it, becauſe there are ſeveral verſes or chapters of *Ezra* and *Daniel* which are written in that language: and the old *Jewiſh targums* or commentaries, which are written in the *Chaldean* tongue, may ſometimes happen to caſt a little light upon a doubtful ſcripture of the *Old Teſtament*.

But it muſt be ſtill owned, that the knowledge of theſe *Eaſtern* tongues does not deſerve to be magnified to ſuch a degree as ſome of the proficients in them

have indulged; wherein they have carried matters beyond all reaſon and juſtice, ſince ſcarce any of the moſt important ſubjects of the goſpel of *Chriſt* and the way of ſalvation can gain any advantage from them.

XXXII. The art of *grammar* comes now to be mentioned. It is a diſtinct thing from the mere knowledge of the languages; for all mankind are taught from their infancy to ſpeak their mother-tongue, by a natural imitation of their mothers and nurſes, and thoſe who are round about them, without any knowledge of the art of *grammar*, and the various obſervations and rules that relate to it. *Grammar* indeed is nothing elſe but rules and obſervations drawn from the common ſpeech of mankind in their ſeveral languages; and it teaches us to ſpeak and pronounce, to ſpell and write with propriety and exactneſs, according to the cuſtom of thoſe in every nation who are or were ſuppoſed to ſpeak and write their own language beſt. Now it is a ſhame for a man to pretend to ſcience and ſtudy in any of the three learned profeſſions, who is not in ſome meaſure acquainted with the propriety of thoſe languages with which he ought to be converſant in his daily ſtudies, and more eſpecially in ſuch as he may ſometimes be called upon to write as well as read.

XXXIII. Next to *grammar*, we proceed to conſider *rhetoric*.

Now *rhetoric* in general is the *art of perſuading*, which may be diſtinguiſhed into theſe three parts; *viz.* (1.) Conveying the ſenſe of the ſpeaker to the underſtanding of the hearers in the cleareſt and moſt intelligible manner, by the plaineſt expreſſions and the moſt lively and ſtriking repreſentations of it, ſo that the mind may be thoroughly convinced of the thing propoſed. (2.) Perſuading the will effectually to chuſe or refuſe the thing ſuggeſted and repreſented. (3.) Raiſing the paſſions in the moſt vivid and forcible manner, ſo as to ſet all the ſoul and every power of nature at work, to purſue or avoid the thing in debate.

To attain this end, there is not only a great deal of art neceſſary in the repreſentation of matters to the

auditory, but alſo in the diſpoſition or method of introducing theſe particular repreſentations, together with the reaſons which might convince, and the various methods which might perſuade and prevail upon the hearers. There are certain ſeaſons wherein a violent torrent of oration, in a diſguiſed and concealed method, may be more effectual than all the niee forms of *logic* and reaſoning. The figures of *interrogation* and *exclamation* have ſometimes a large place and happy effect in this ſort of diſcourſe, and no figure of ſpeech ſhould be wanting here where the ſpeaker has art enough happily to introduce it.

There are many *remarks* and *rules* laid down by the teachers of this art, to improve a young genius into thoſe glorious talents whereby *Tully* and *Demoſthenes* acquired that amazing influence and ſucceſs in their own age and nation, and that immortal fame through all nations and ages. And it is with great advantage theſe rules may be peruſed and learned. But a happy genius, a lively imagination, and warm paſſions, together with a due degree of knowledge and ſkill in the ſubject to be debated, and a perpetual peruſal of the writings of the beſt orators, and hearing the beſt ſpeakers, will do more to make an orator, than all the rules of art in the world, without theſe natural talents, and this careful imitation of the moſt approved and happieſt orators.

XXXIV. Now you will preſently ſuppoſe that *pleaders at the bar* have great need of this art of *rhetoric*; but it has been a juſt doubt, whether pleading in our *Britiſh* courts of juſtice, before a ſkilful judge, ſhould admit of any other aid from *rhetoric*, than that which teaches to open a cauſe clearly, and ſpread it in the moſt perſpicuous, complete, and impartial manner before the eyes of him that judges: for impartial juſtice being the thing which is ſought, there ſhould be no artifices uſed, no eloquence or powers of language employed to perſuade the will, or work upon the paſſions, leſt the deciſive ſentence of the judge ſhould be biaſſed or warped into injuſtice. For this reaſon, Mr.

Locke would baniſh all *pleaders* in the law for fees, out of his government of *Carolina*, in his poſthumous works, though perhaps that great man might poſſibly be too ſevere in ſo univerſal a cenſure of the profeſſion.

XXXV. But the caſe is very different with regard to *divines*: the eloquence of the pulpit, beyond all controverſy, has a much larger extent.

Their buſineſs is not to plead a cauſe of right and wrong before a wiſe and ſkilful judge, but to addreſs all the ranks of mankind, the high and low, the wiſe and the unwiſe, the ſober and the vicious, and perſuade them all to purſue and perſevere in virtue with regard to themſelves, in juſtice and goodneſs with regard to their neighbours, and piety towards God. Theſe are affairs of everlaſting importance, and moſt of the perſons to whom theſe addreſſes are made are not wiſe and ſkilful judges, but are influenced and drawn ſtrongly to the contrary ſide by their own ſinful appetites and paſſions, and bribed or biaſſed by the corrupt cuſtoms of the world.

There is therefore a neceſſity not only of a clear and faithful repreſentation of things to men, in order to convince their reaſon and judgment, but of all the ſkill and force of perſuaſion addreſſed to the will and the paſſions. So *Tully* addreſſed the whole ſenate of *Rome*, and *Demoſthenes* the *Athenian* people, among whom were capacities and inclinations of infinite variety; and therefore they made uſe of all the lightning and thunder, all the entreaties and terrors, all the ſoothing elegancies and the flowery beauties of language which their art could furniſh them with. *Divines* in the pulpit have much the ſame ſort of hearers, and therefore they ſhould imitate thoſe ancient examples. The *underſtanding* indeed ought to be firſt convinced by the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt force of reaſoning; but when this is done, all the powerful motives ſhould be uſed, which have any juſt influence upon human nature, all the ſprings of paſſion ſhould be touched, to awaken the ſtupid and the thoughtleſs into conſi-

deration, to penetrate and melt the hardeſt heart, to perſuade the unwilling, to excite the lazy, to reclaim the obſtinate, and reform the vicious part of mankind, as well as to encourage thoſe who are humble and pious, and to ſupport their practice and their hope. The tribes of men are ſunk into ſo fatal a degeneracy and dreadful diſtance from God, and from all that is holy and happy, that all the eloquence which a preacher is maſter of, ſhould be employed in order to recover the world from its ſhameful ruin and wretchedneſs by the goſpel of our bleſſed Saviour, and reſtore it to virtue and piety, to God and happineſs, by the divine power of this goſpel. O may ſuch glorious maſters of ſacred oratory never be wanting in the pulpits of *Great Britain!*

XXXVI. Shall I now ſpeak ſomething of my ſentiments concerning *poeſy?*

As for books of *poeſy*, whether in the learned or in the modern languages, they are of great uſe to be read at hours of leiſure, by all perſons that make any pretence to good education or learning; and that for ſeveral reaſons.

1. Becauſe there are many couplets or ſtanzas written in poetic meaſures, which contain a *variety of morals or rules of practice* relating to the common prudentials of mankind, as well as to matters of *religion*, and the poetic numbers (or rhyme, if there be any) add very conſiderable force to the memory.

Beſides, many an elegant and admirable ſentiment or deſcription of things which are found among the poets, are well worth committing to memory, and the particular meaſures of verſe greatly aſſiſt us in recollecting ſuch excellent paſſages, which might ſometimes raiſe our converſation from low and grovelling ſubjects.

2. In *heroic verſe*, but eſpecially in the *grander lyrics*, there are ſometimes ſuch noble elevations of thought and paſſion as illuminate all things around us, and convey to the ſoul moſt exalted and magnificent images and ſublime ſentiments: theſe furniſh us with glorious ſprings and *mediums* to raiſe and aggrandize

our conceptions, to warm our ſouls, to awaken the better paſſions, and to elevate them even to a divine pitch, and that for devotional purpoſes. It is the *lyric ode* which has ſhewn to the world ſome of the happieſt examples of this kind, and I cannot ſay but this part of poeſy has been my favourite amuſement above all others.

And for this reaſon it is, that I have never thought the *heroic* poems, *Greek*, *Latin*, or *Engliſh*, which have obtained the higheſt fame in the world, are ſufficiently diverſified, exalted, or animated, for want of the interſperſion of now and then an *elegiac* or a *lyric ode*. This might have been done with great and beautiful propriety, where the poet has introduced a ſong at a feaſt, or the joys of a victory, or the ſoliloquies of divine ſatisfaction, or the penſive and deſpairing agonies of diſtreſſing ſorrow. Why ſhould that which is called the *moſt glorious form of poeſy*, be bound down and confined to ſuch a long and endleſs uniformity of meaſures, when it ſhould kindle or melt the ſoul, ſwell or ſink it into all the various and tranſporting changes of which human nature is capable?

COWLEY, in his unfiniſhed fragment of the *Davideis*, has ſhewn us this way to improvement; and whatever blemiſhes may be found in other parts of that *heroic eſſay*, this beauty and glory of it ought to be preſerved for imitation. I am well aſſured that if *Homer* and *Virgil* had happened to practiſe it, it would have been renowned and glorified by every critic. I am greatly miſtaken, if this wiſe mixture of numbers would not be a further reach of perfection than they have ever attained to without it: let it be remembered, that it is not nature and ſtrict reaſon, but a weak and awful reverence for antiquity and the vogue of fallible men, that has eſtabliſhed thoſe *Greek* and *Roman* writings as abſolute and complete patterns. In ſeveral ages there have been ſome men of learning who have very juſtly diſputed this glory, and have pointed to many of their miſtakes.

3. But ſtill there is another end of reading poeſy, and perhaps the moſt conſiderable advantage to be obtained from it by the bulk of mankind, and that is, to furniſh our tongues with the richeſt and the moſt polite variety of phraſes and words upon all occaſions of life or religion. He that writes well in verſe, will often find a neceſſity to ſend his thoughts in ſearch through all the treaſure of words that expreſs any one idea in the ſame language, that ſo he may comport with the meaſures, or the rhyme of the verſe which he writes, or with his own moſt beautiful and vivid ſentiments of the thing he deſcribes. Now by much reading of this kind, we ſhall inſenſibly acquire the habit and ſkill of diverſifying our phraſes upon all occaſions, and of expreſſing our ideas in the moſt proper and beautiful language, whether we write or ſpeak of the things of God or men.

It is pity that ſome of theſe harmonious writers have ever indulged any thing uncleanly or impure to defile their paper and abuſe the ears of their readers, or to offend againſt the rules of the niceſt virtue and politeneſs: but ſtill amongſt the writings of Mr. *Dryden*, and Mr. *Pope*, and Dr. *Young*, as well as others, there is a ſufficient choice in our own language, wherein we ſhall not find any indecency to ſhock the moſt modeſt tongue or ear.

Perhaps there has hardly been a writer in any nation, and I may dare to affirm, there is none in ours, has a richer and happier talent of painting to the life, or has ever diſcovered ſuch a large and inexhauſted variety of deſcription, as the celebrated Mr. *Pope*. If you read his tranſlation of *Homer's Iliad*, you will find almoſt all the terms or phraſes in our tongue that are needful to expreſs any thing that is grand or magnificent: but if you peruſe his *Odyſſee*, which deſcends much more into common life, there is ſcarce any uſeful ſubject of diſcourſe or thought, or any ordinary occurrence which he has not cultivated and dreſſed in the moſt proper language; and yet ſtill he has ennobled

and enlivened even the lower ſubjects with the brighteſt and moſt agreeable ornaments.

I ſhould add here alſo, that if the ſame author had more frequently employed his pen on divine themes, his ſhort poem on the *Meſſiah*, and ſome part of his letters between *Abelard* and *Eloiſa*, with that ode on the *dying Chriſtian*, &c. ſufficiently aſſure us, that his pen would have honourably imitated ſome of the tender ſcenes of penitential ſorrow, as well as the ſublimer odes of the *Hebrew* Pſalmiſt, and perhaps diſcovered to us in a better manner than any other tranſlation has done, how great a poet ſat upon the throne of *Iſrael*.

4. After all that I have ſaid, there is yet a further uſe of reading *poeſy*, and that is, when the mind has been fatigued with ſtudies of a more laborious kind, or when it is any ways unfit for the purſuit of more difficult ſubjects, it may be as it were unbent, and repoſe itſelf a while on the flowery meadows where the muſes dwell. It is a very ſenſible relief to the ſoul when it is over-tired, to amuſe itſelf with the numbers and the beautiful ſentiments of the poets, and in a little time this agreeable amuſement may recover the languid ſpirits to activity and more important ſervice.

XXXVII. ALL this I propoſe to the world as my beſt obſervations about reading of verſe. But if the queſtion were offered to me, *Shall a ſtudent of a bright genius never divert himſelf with writing poeſy?* I would anſwer, *Yes, when he cannot poſſibly help it:* a lower genius in mature years would heartily wiſh that he had ſpent much more time in reading the beſt authors of this kind, and employed much fewer hours in writing. But it muſt be confeſſed, or ſuppoſed at leaſt, that there may be ſeaſons when it is hardly poſſible for a poetic ſoul to reſtrain the fancy or quench the flame, when it is hard to ſuppreſs the exuberant flow of lofty ſentiments, and prevent the imagination from this ſort of ſtyle or language: and that is the only ſeaſon, I think, wherein this inclination ſhould be indulged; eſpecially by perſons who have devoted

themſelves to profeſſions of a different kind: and one reaſon is, becauſe what they write in that hour is more likely to carry in it ſome appearance above nature, ſome happy imitation of the dictates of the muſe *.

XXXVIII. THERE are other things beſides *hiſtory*, *grammar*, and *languages*, *rhetoric* and *poeſy*, which have been included under the name of *philological* knowledge; ſuch as, an acquaintance with the *notions*, *cuſtoms*, *manners*, *tempers*, *polity*, &c. of the various nations of the earth, or the diſtinct ſects and tribes of mankind. This is neceſſary in order to underſtand *hiſtory* the better; and every man who is a *lawyer* or a *gentleman*, ought to obtain ſome acquaintance with theſe things, without which he can never read *hiſtory* to any great advantage, nor can he maintain his own ſtation and character in life with honour and dignity without ſome inſight into them.

XXXIX. STUDENTS in *divinity* ought to ſeek a larger acquaintance with the *Jewiſh* laws, polity, cuſtoms, &c. in order to underſtand many paſſages of the Old Teſtament and the New, and to vindicate the ſacred writers from the reproaches of Infidels. An acquaintance alſo with many of the *Roman* and *Grecian* affairs is needful to explain ſeveral texts of ſcripture in the New Teſtament, to lead ſincere inquirers into the true and genuine ſenſe of the evangeliſts and apoſtles, and to guard their writings from the unreaſonable cavils of men.

XL. THE art of *criticiſm* is reckoned by ſome as a diſtinct part of *philology*; but it is in truth nothing elſe than a more exact and accurate knowledge or ſkill in the other parts of it, and a readineſs to apply that knowledge upon all occaſions, in order to judge well of what relates to theſe ſubjects, to explain what is obſcure in the authors which we read, to ſupply what is

* The *muſe* in the ancient *Heathen* ſenſe is ſuppoſed to be a goddeſs; but in the *philoſophic* ſenſe it can mean no more, than a bright genius, with a warm and ſtrong imagination, elevated to an uncommon degree.

defective, and amend what is erroneous in manuſcripts or ancient copies, to correct the miſtakes of authors and editors in the ſenſe or the words, to reconcile the controverſies of the learned, and by this means to ſpread a juſter knowledge of theſe things among the inquiſitive part of mankind.

Every man who pretends to the learned profeſſions, if he doth not ariſe to be a *critic* himſelf in *philological* matters, he ſhould be frequently converſing with thoſe books, whether dictionaries, paraphraſts, commentators, or other critics, which may relieve any difficulties he meets with, and give him a more exact acquaintance with thoſe ſtudies which he purſues.

And whenſoever any perſon is arrived to ſuch a degree of knowledge in theſe things as to furniſh him well for the practice of *criticiſm*, let him take great care that pride and vanity, contempt of others, with inward wrath and inſolence, do not mingle themſelves with his remarks and cenſures. Let him remember the common frailties of human nature, and the miſtakes to which the wiſeſt man is ſometimes liable; that he may practiſe this art with due modeſty and candour.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART SECOND.

CONTAINING

VARIOUS REMARKS AND RULES

ABOUT THE

Communication of Useful Knowledge.

PREFACE.

THE author's name, which is prefixed to this book, renders it altogether needleſs for us to ſay any thing in order to recommend it: and we need not aſſure any judicious reader, who has been converſant with Dr. *Watts*'s writings, that this is the genuine work of that excellent author; for he cannot fail of diſcerning the doctor's eaſy ſtile, and beautiful manner of expreſſion in every page. We eſteem it an honour done us by that truly great man, that he was pleaſed, by his laſt will, to entruſt us with his manuſcripts which he deſigned for the preſs; however, he lived to publiſh ſeveral of thoſe himſelf, after his will was made, ſo that not many remain to be publiſhed by us. Some indeed there are remaining, which he did originally intend for the preſs, but his broken ſtate of health did not permit him to finiſh them, and they are left too imperfect to be ever publiſhed. Of this ſort, among others, is *the larger Diſcourſe on Pſalmody*, which he gave notice of his intention to publiſh in the preface to the ſecond edition of his *Hymns*, when he withdrew the *ſhorter Eſſay* on that ſubject, which was annexed to the firſt edition. There are alſo among his manuſcripts, ſome tracts relating to a doctrinal controverſy, which the doctor had been engaged in, but which the world ſeems to be tired of: ſo that, moſt probably, this *ſecond part of the Improvement of the Mind*, with the *Diſcourſe on Education*, and *ſome additions to the Reliquiæ Juveniles*, are all the poſthumous works of Dr. *Watts* that will ever be printed.

As to this work in particular, a conſiderable part of it was corrected for the preſs by the doctor's own hand; and as to the reſt of it, he did not leave it ſo far unfiniſhed as ſhould, in his own judgment, diſcourage the publiſhing it; for he has left this note in a paper along with it, "Though this book, or the ſecond volume of

" the Improvement of the Mind, is not ſo far finiſhed as " I could wiſh, yet I leave it among the number of " books corrected for the preſs; for it is very eaſy for " any perſon of genius and ſcience to finiſh it, and " publiſh it in a form ſufficiently uſeful to the world." The corrections we have preſumed to make are comparatively but *few* and *trivial*; and when, now and then, it was thought needful to add a line or two for the illuſtration of any paſſage, it is generally put in the form of a note at the foot of the page.

It may perhaps be expected we ſhould make ſome apology, for delaying the publiſhing of this book ſo long after the author's death; a book that has been ſo much expected and ſo earneſtly deſired, as appears by ſeveral letters found in the doctor's ſtudy, from eminent perſons and from learned ſocieties. There are various cauſes that have contributed to the delay, which the world need not be informed of; but the remote diſtance of our habitations, and the multiplicity of buſineſs in which each of us is ſtatedly engaged, are circumſtances pretty generally known, and which we hope will be admitted in excuſe for ſome part of the delay, and ſome part the bookſellers muſt anſwer for. However we are the leſs ſolicitous to apologize for not publiſhing this book ſooner, as we are ſatisfied it will be welcome now it comes; and that thoſe who, upon reading the firſt volume, have ſo earneſtly deſired the ſecond, will not be diſappointed when they read it.

We have only to add, our moſt ſincere wiſhes and prayers, that a book ſo admirably ſuited to improve the minds of men, eſpecially of the riſing generation, and to promote univerſal goodneſs, as this appears to be, may be attended with a bleſſing from on high.

D. JENNINGS.
P. DODDRIDGE.

June 26, 1751.

THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE MIND.

PART II.

COMMUNICATION *of* USEFUL KNOWLEDGE.

INTRODUCTION.

THE chief design of the former part of this book is to lead us into proper methods for the *improvement of our knowledge*; let us now consider what are the best means of *improving the minds of others*, and of *communicating* to them the *knowledge* which we have acquired. If the treasures of the mind should be hoarded up and concealed, they would profit none besides the possessor, and even his advantage by the possession would be poor and narrow, in comparison of what the same treasures would yield, both to himself and to the world, by a free communication and diffusion of them. Large quantities of knowledge acquired and reserved by one man, like heaps of gold and silver, would contract a sort of rust and disagreeable aspect, by lying in everlasting secrecy and silence; but they are burnished and glitter by perpetnal circulation, through the tribes of mankind.

The two chief ways of conveying knowledge to others, are, that of *verbal instruction* to our disciples,

or by *writing and publiſhing* our thoughts to the world.

Here therefore I ſhall firſt propoſe ſome obſervations which relate to the conveyance of knowledge to others, by *regular lectures* of *verbal inſtruction*, or by *converſation*; I ſhall repreſent ſeveral of the chief prejudices of which learners are in danger, with directions to guard againſt them, and then mention ſome of the eaſieſt and moſt effectual ways of *convincing perſons of their miſtakes*, and of dealing with their underſtandings, when they labour under the *power of prejudice*. I ſhall afterwards add, by way of appendix, an eſſay written many years ago, on the ſubject of *education*, when I deſigned a more complete treatiſe of it.

CHAP. I.

Methods of Teaching and Reading Lectures.

HE that has learned any thing thoroughly, in a *clear and methodical manner*, and has attained a *diſtinct perception*, and an *ample ſurvey* of the whole ſubject, is generally beſt prepared to teach the ſame ſubject in a *clear and eaſy method*; for having acquired a large and diſtinct idea of it, and made it familiar to himſelf by frequent *meditation, reading, and occaſional diſcourſe*; he is ſuppoſed to ſee it on all ſides, to graſp it with all its appendices and relations in one ſurvey, and is better able to repreſent it to the learner in all its views, with all its properties, relations, and conſequences. He knows which view or ſide of the ſubject to hold out firſt to his diſciple, and how to propoſe to his underſtanding that part of it which is eaſieſt to apprehend; and alſo knows how to ſet it in ſuch a light, as is moſt likely to allure and to aſſiſt his further inquiry.

But it is not every one who is a *great ſcholar* that always becomes the *happieſt teacher*, even though he may have a clear conception, and a methodical as well as an extenſive ſurvey of the branches of any ſcience. He

muſt alſo be *well acquainted with words*, as well as *ideas*, in a proper variety; that when his diſciple does not take in the ideas in one form of expreſſion, he may change the phraſe into ſeveral forms, till at laſt he hits the underſtanding of his ſcholar, and enlightens it in the juſt idea of truth.

Beſides this, a tutor ſhould be a perſon of a *happy and condeſcending temper*, who has patience to bear with a ſlowneſs of perception, or want of ſagacity in ſome learners. He ſhould alſo have *much candour of ſoul*, to paſs a gentle cenſure on their impertinences, and to pity them in their miſtakes, and uſe every mild and engaging method for inſinuating knowledge into thoſe who are willing and diligent in ſeeking truth, as well as reclaiming thoſe who are wandering into error. But of this I have ſpoken ſomewhat already, in a chapter of the former part, and ſhall have occaſion to expreſs ſomething more of it ſhortly.

A very pretty and uſeful way to lead a perſon into the knowledge of any particular truth is, by *queſtion and anſwer*, which is the *Socratical method of diſputation*, and therefore I refer the reader to that chapter or ſection which treats of it. On this account, *dialogues* are uſed as a polite and pleaſant method of leading gentlemen and ladies into ſome of the ſciences, who ſeek not the moſt accurate and methodical treaſure of learning.

But the moſt uſual, and perhaps the moſt excellent way of inſtructing ſtudents in any of the ſciences is, by *reading lectures*, as tutors in the *academy* do to their pupils.

The firſt work is to chooſe a *book well written*, which contains a *ſhort ſcheme or abſtract of that ſcience*; or at leaſt, it ſhould not be a very copious and diffuſive treatiſe. Or, if the tutor knows not any ſuch book already written, he ſhould draw up an *abſtract of that ſcience* himſelf, containing the moſt ſubſtantial and important parts of it, diſpoſed in ſuch a method as he beſt approves.

Let a chapter or ſection of this be read daily by the learner, on which the tutor ſhould paraphraſe in this manner, namely,

He ſhould *explain* both *words* and *ideas* more largely, and eſpecially what is *dark* and *difficult* ſhould be *opened* and *illuſtrated*, partly by various forms of ſpeech, and partly by apt ſimilitudes and examples. Where the *ſenſe* of the author is *dubious*, it muſt alſo be *fixed* and *determined*.

Where the *arguments* are *ſtrong* and cogent, they ſhould be *enforced* by ſome further paraphraſe, and the truth of the inferences ſhould be made plainly to appear. Where the *arguments* are *weak* and inſufficient, they ſhould be either *confirmed* or *rejected* as uſeleſs; and new arguments, if need be, ſhould be added to ſupport that doctrine.

What is *treated very conciſely* in the author ſhould be *amplified*, and where ſeveral things are *laid cloſely* together, they muſt be *taken to pieces* and *opened by parts*.

Where the tutor *differs* from the author which he reads, he ſhould gently point out and *confute his miſtakes*.

Where the *method* and *order* of the book is juſt and happy, it ſhould be *purſued* and *commended*: where it is *defective* and irregular, it ſhould be *corrected*.

The *moſt neceſſary*, the moſt remarkable and uſeful parts of that treatiſe, or of that ſcience, ſhould be *peculiarly recommended to* the learners, and *preſſed upon them*, that they would retain it in memory; and what is more *unneceſſary* or *ſuperfluous* ſhould be *diſtinguiſhed*, leſt the learner ſhould ſpend too much time in the more needleſs parts of a ſcience.

The *various ends*, *uſes*, *and ſervices* of that ſcience, or of any part of it, ſhould be alſo *declared* and *exemplified*, as far as the tutor hath opportunity and furniture to do it; particularly in *mathematics* and *natural philoſophy*.

And if there be any thing *remarkably beautiful or defective in the ſtyle* of the writer, it is proper for the tutor to make a *juſt remark* upon it.

While he is reading and explaining any particular treatiſe to his pupils, he may *compare the different editions* of the ſame book, or different *writers* upon the ſame ſubject: he ſhould inform them where that ſubject is treated by other authors, which they may peruſe, and lead his diſciples thereby to a further *elucidation*, *confirmation*, or *improvement* of that theme of diſcourſe in which he is inſtructing them.

It is alluring and agreeable to the learner alſo, now and then to be entertained with ſome *hiſtorical remarks*, or *any occurrences or uſeful ſtories* which the tutor has met with, relating to the ſeveral parts of ſuch a ſcience, provided he does not put off his pupils merely with ſuch ſtories, and neglect to give them a ſolid and rational information of the theme in hand. Teachers ſhould endeavour, as far as poſſible, to join *profit and pleaſure* together, and mingle *delight with their inſtructions*; but at the ſame time they muſt take heed, that they do not merely amuſe the ears, and gratify the fancy of their diſciples, without enriching their minds.

In reading lectures of inſtruction, let the teacher be very ſolicitous that the learners *take up his meaning*, and therefore he ſhould frequently inquire, whether he expreſſes himſelf intelligibly, whether they underſtand his ſenſe, and take in all his ideas, as he endeavours to convey them in his own forms of ſpeech.

It is neceſſary that he who inſtructs others, ſhould uſe the *moſt proper ſtyle* for the conveyance of his ideas eaſily into the minds of thoſe who hear him; and though in *teaching the ſciences*, a perſon is not confined to the ſame rules by which we muſt govern our language *in converſation*, for he muſt neceſſarily make uſe of many *terms of art and hard words*, yet he ſhould never uſe them merely to ſhew his learning, nor affect ſounding language without neceſſity; a caution which we ſhall ſoon farther inculcate.

I think it very convenient and proper, if not abſolutely neceſſary, that when a tutor reads a *following lecture* to his pupils, he ſhould *run over the foregoing*

lecture in queſtions propoſed to them, and by this means acquaint himſelf with their daily proficiency *. It is in vain for the learner to object, *ſurely we are not ſchool-boys, to ſay our leſſons again; we came to be taught, and not to be catechiſed and examined.* But alas! how is it poſſible for a teacher to proceed in his inſtructions, if he knows not how far the learner takes in and remembers what he has been taught?

Beſides, I muſt generally believe, it is ſloth or idleneſs, it is real ignorance, incapacity, or unreaſonable pride, that makes a learner refuſe to give his teacher an account how far he has profited by his laſt inſtructions. For want of this *conſtant examination*, young gentlemen have ſpent *ſome idle and uſeleſs years*, even under the daily labours and inſpection of a *learned teacher*; and they have returned from the *academy* without the gain of any one *ſcience*, and even with the ſhameful loſs of their *claſſical* learning, that is, the knowledge of *Greek* and *Latin*, which they had learnt in the grammar-ſchool.

Let the teacher always *accommodate himſelf to the genius, temper, and capacity of his diſciples*, and practiſe various methods of prudence to allure, perſuade, and aſſiſt every one of them in their purſuit of knowledge.

Where the ſcholar has *leſs ſagacity*, let the teacher enlarge his illuſtrations; let him ſearch and find out where the learner ſticks, what is the difficulty; and thus let him help the labouring intellect.

Where the learner manifeſts *forward genius*, and a *ſprightly curioſity* by *frequent inquiries*; let the teacher oblige ſuch an inquiſitive ſoul by ſatisfying thoſe queſtions, as far as may be done by decency and conve-

* Note, This precaution, though never to be neglected, is of eſpecial importance when a pupil is entering on any new branch of learning, where it is abſolutely neceſſary the fundamental definitions and principles ſhould not only be clearly underſtood, but ſhould be rendered very familiar to the mind: and probably moſt tutors have found young perſons ſadly bewildered, as they have gone on in their lectures, for want of a little more patience and care in this reſpect.

niency; and where theſe inquiries are unſeaſonable, let him not ſilence the young inquirer with a *magiſterial rebuff*, but with much candour and gentleneſs poſtpone thoſe queſtions, and refer them to a proper hour.

Curioſity is a uſeful ſpring of knowledge: it ſhould be encouraged in *children*, and awakened by frequent and familiar methods of talking with them. It ſhould be indulged in *youth*, but not without a prudent moderation. In thoſe who have *too much*, it ſhould be limited by a wiſe and gentle reſtraint or delay, leſt by wandering after every thing, they learn nothing to perfection. In thoſe who have *too little*, it ſhould be excited, leſt they grow ſtupid, narrow-ſpirited, ſelf-ſatisfied, and never attain a treaſure of ideas, or an aptitude of underſtanding.

Let not the *teacher* demand or expect things too ſublime and difficult from the *humble*, *modeſt*, and *fearful* diſciple: And where ſuch a one gives a juſt and happy anſwer, even to plain and eaſy queſtions, let him have words of commendation and love ready for him. Let him encourage every ſpark of kindling light, till it grow up to bright evidence and confirmed knowledge.

Where he finds a lad *pert*, *poſitive*, *and preſuming*, let the tutor take every juſt occaſion to ſhew him his error: let him ſet the abſurdity in complete light before him, and convince him by a full demonſtration of his miſtake, till he ſees and feels it, and learns to be modeſt and humble.

A *teacher* ſhould not only obſerve the different ſpirit and humour among his ſcholars, but he ſhould watch the various efforts of their reaſon, and growth of their underſtanding. He ſhould practiſe in his young nurſery of learning, as a *ſkilful gardener* does in his vegetable dominions, and apply prudent methods of cultivation to every plant. Let him with a diſcreet and gentle hand, nip or prune the irregular ſhoots, let him guard and encourage the tender buddings of the underſtanding, till they be raiſed to a bloſſom, and let him kindly cheriſh the younger fruits.

The *tutor* ſhould take *every occaſion* to inſtil knowledge into his *diſciples*, and make uſe of every occurrence in life, to raiſe ſome profitable converſation upon it; he ſhould frequently inquire ſomething of his diſciples, that may ſet their young reaſon to work, and teach them how to form inferences, and to draw one propoſition out of another.

Reaſon being that faculty of the mind which he has to deal with in his pupil, let him endeavour by all proper and familiar methods to call it into exerciſe, and to enlarge the powers of it. He ſhould take frequent opportunities to ſhew them when an *idea* is clear or confuſed, when the *propoſition* is evident or doubtful, and when an *argument* is feeble or ſtrong. And by this means the minds will be ſo formed, that whatſoever he propoſes with evidence and ſtrength of reaſon, they will readily receive.

When any *uncommon appearances* ariſe in the *natural*, *moral*, or *political world*, he ſhould invite and inſtruct them to make their remarks on it, and give them the beſt reflections of his own, for the improvement of their minds.

He ſhould by all means make it appear *that he loves his pupils*, and that he ſeeks nothing ſo much as their increaſe of knowledge, and their growth in all valuable acquirements: this will engage their affection to his perſon, and procure a juſt attention to his lectures.

And indeed there is but little hope, that a teacher ſhould obtain any ſucceſs in his inſtructions, unleſs thoſe that hear him have ſome good degree of eſteem and reſpect for his perſon and character. And here I cannot but take notice by the way, that it is a matter of infinite and unſpeakable injury to the people of any town or pariſh, where the miniſter lies under contempt. If he has procured it by his own conduct, he is doubly criminal, becauſe of the injury he does to the ſouls of them that hear him: but if this contempt and reproach be caſt upon him by the wicked, malicious, and unjuſt cenſures of men, they muſt bear all the ill conſequences of receiving no good by his la-

bours, and will be accountable hereafter to the great and divine Judge of all.

It would be very neceſſary to add in this place (if *tutors* were not well apprized of it before), that ſince *learners* are obliged to ſeek a divine bleſſing on their ſtudies, by fervent prayer to the God of all wiſdom, their *tutors* ſhould go before them in this pious practice, and make daily addreſſes to heaven for the ſucceſs of their inſtructions.

CHAP. II.

Of an Inſtructive Style.

THE moſt neceſſary, and the moſt uſeful character of a ſtyle fit for inſtruction is, that it be *plain*, *perſpicuous*, and *eaſy*. And here I ſhall firſt point out all thoſe errors in ſtyle, which diminiſh or deſtroy the *perſpicuity* of it, and then mention a few directions, how to obtain a perſpicuous and eaſy ſtyle.

The errors of a ſtyle, which muſt be avoided by teachers, are theſe that follow:

I. *THE uſe of many foreign words, which are not ſufficiently naturalized and mingled with the language which we ſpeak or write.* It is true, that in teaching the ſciences in *Engliſh*, we muſt ſometimes uſe words borrowed from the *Greek* and *Latin*, for we have not in *Engliſh*, names for a variety of ſubjects which belong to *learning*; but when a man affects upon all occaſions, to bring in long ſounding words from the ancient languages without neceſſity, and mingles *French*, and other *outlandiſh* terms and phraſes, where plain *Engliſh* would ſerve as well, he betrays a vain and fooliſh genius unbecoming a teacher.

II. *AVOID a fantaſtic learned ſtyle, borrowed from the various ſciences, where the ſubject and matter do not require the uſe of them.* Do not affect terms of art on every occaſion, nor ſeek to ſhow your learning by ſounding words and dark phraſes; this is properly called *pedantry*.

Young preachers juſt come from the ſchools, are often tempted to fill their ſermons with logical and metaphyſical terms in explaining the text, and feed their hearers with ſonorous words of vanity. This ſcholaſtic language, perhaps, may flatter their own ambition, and raiſe a wonderment at their learning among the ſtaring multitude, without any manner of influence toward the inſtruction of the ignorant, or the reformation of the immoral or impious: theſe terms of art are but the tools of an artificer, by which his work is wrought in private; but the tools ought not to appear in the finiſhed workmanſhip.

There are ſome perſons ſo fond of *geometry*, that they bring in lines and circles, tangents and parabolas, theorems, problems, and poſtulates, upon all occaſions. Others who have dealt in *aſtronomy*, borrow even their *nouns* and their *verbs*, in their common diſcourſe, from the ſtars and planets; inſtead of ſaying, *Jacob had twelve ſons*, they tell you, *Jacob* had as many ſons as there are *ſigns in the zodiac*. If they deſcribe an inconſtant perſon, they make a planet of him, and ſet him forth in all his appearances, *direct*, *retrograde*, and *ſtationary*. If a candle be ſet behind the ſcreen, they call it *eclipſed*; and tell you fine ſtories of the orbit and the revolutions, the radii and the limb, or circumference of a cart-wheel.

Others again dreſs up their ſenſe in *chymical* language; extracts and oils, ſalts and eſſences, exalt and invigorate their diſcourſes: a great wit with them, is *ſublimated ſpirit*; and a blockhead, is *caput mortuum*. A certain doctor in his bill, ſwells in his own idea when he tells the town, that he has been counſellor to the counſellors of ſeveral kings and princes, and that he has arrived at the knowledge of the green, black, and golden dragon, known only to *magicians* and *hermetic philoſophers*. It would be well if the quacks alone had a patent for this language.

III. THERE are ſome fine affected words that are uſed only at *court*, and ſome peculiar phraſes that are ſounding or gaudy, and belong only to *the theatre*;

theſe ſhould not come into the lectures of inſtruction: the language of poets has too much of metaphor in it, to lead mankind into clear and diſtinct ideas of things: the buſineſs of poeſy is to ſtrike the ſoul with a glaring light, and to urge the paſſions into a flame by ſplendid ſhews, by ſtrong images, and a pathetic vehemence of ſtyle; but it is another ſort of ſpeech, that is beſt ſuited to lead the calm inquirer into juſt conceptions of things.

IV. *THERE is a mean vulgar ſtyle, borrowed from the lower ranks of mankind, the baſeſt characters, and meaneſt affairs of life:* this is alſo to be avoided; for it ſhould be ſuppoſed, that perſons of a liberal education, have not been bred up within the hearing of ſuch language, and conſequently they cannot underſtand it: beſides, that it would create very offenſive ideas, ſhould we borrow even ſimilies for illuſtration from the ſcullery, the dunghil, and the jakes.

V. *AN obſcure and myſterious manner of expreſſion and cloudy language is to be avoided.* Some perſons have been led by education, or by ſome fooliſh prejudices, into a dark and unintelligible way of thinking and ſpeaking, and this continues with them all their lives, and clouds and confounds their ideas. Perhaps ſome of theſe may have been bleſſed with a great and comprehenſive genius, with ſublime natural parts, and a torrent of ideas flowing in upon them; yet for want of clearneſs, in the manner of their conception and language, they ſometimes drown their own ſubject of diſcourſe, and overwhelm their argument in darkneſs and perplexity. Such preachers as have read much of the myſtical divinity of the Papiſts, and imitated their manner of expreſſion, have many times buried a fine underſtanding under the obſcurity of ſuch a ſtyle.

VI. *A LONG and tedious ſtyle is very improper for a teacher,* for this alſo leſſens the perſpicuity of it. Some learned writers are never ſatisfied, unleſs they fill up every ſentence with a great number of ideas and ſentiments; they ſwell their propoſitions to an enormous ſize by explications, exceptions, and precautions, leſt

they ſhould be miſtaken, and crowd them all into the ſame period; they involve and darken their diſcourſe by many a parentheſis, and prolong their ſentences to a tireſome extent, beyond the reach of a common comprehenſion: ſuch ſort of writers or ſpeakers may be rich in knowledge, but they are ſeldom fit to communicate it. He that would gain a happy talent for the inſtruction of others, muſt know how to diſentangle and divide his thoughts, if too many of them are ready to crowd into one paragraph; and let him rather ſpeak three ſentences diſtinctly and perſpicuouſly, which the hearer receives at once with his ears and his ſoul, than crowd all the thoughts into one ſentence, which the hearer has forgotten before he can underſtand it.

But this leads me to the next thing I propoſed, which was to mention ſome *methods*, whereby ſuch a perſpicuity of ſtyle may be obtained as is proper for inſtruction.

1. *Accuſtom yourſelf to read thoſe authors who think and write with great clearneſs and evidence*, ſuch as convey their ideas into your underſtanding, as faſt as your eye or tongue can run over their ſentences; this will imprint upon the mind an habit of imitation, we ſhall learn the ſtyle with which we are very converſant, and practiſe it with eaſe and ſucceſs.

2. *Get a diſtinct and comprehenſive knowledge of the ſubject which you treat of*; ſurvey it on all ſides, and make yourſelf perfect maſter of it: then you will have all the ſentiments that relate to it in your view and under your command, and your tongue will very eaſily clothe thoſe ideas with words which your mind has firſt made ſo familiar and eaſy to itſelf.

Scribendi recte ſapere eſt et principium et fons,
Verbaque proviſam rem non invita ſequentur.
Hor. *de Arte Poet.*

Good teaching from good knowledge ſprings,
Words will make haſte to follow things.

3. *BE well ſkilled in the language which you ſpeak*; acquaint yourſelf with all the idioms and ſpecial phraſes of it, which are neceſſary to convey the needful ideas on the ſubject of which you treat, in the moſt various and moſt eaſy manner to the underſtanding of the hearer: the variation of a phraſe in ſeveral forms is of admirable uſe to inſtruct, it is like turning all ſides of the ſubject to view; and if the learner happens not to take in the ideas in one form of ſpeech, probably another may be ſucceſsful for that end.

Upon this account I have always thought it an uſeful manner of inſtruction, which is uſed in ſome *Latin* ſchools, which they call *variation*. Take ſome plain ſentence in the *Engliſh* tongue, and then turn it into many forms in *Latin*; as for inſtance, *a wolf let into the ſheep-fold, will devour the ſheep. If you let a wolf into the fold, the ſheep will be devoured: the wolf will devour the ſheep, if the ſheep-fold be left open. If the fold be not left ſhut carefully, the wolf will devour the ſheep: the ſheep will be devoured by the wolf, if it find the way into the fold open. There is no defence of the ſheep from the wolf, unleſs it be kept out of the fold. A ſlaughter will be made among the ſheep, if the wolf can get into the fold.* Thus by turning the *active* voice of verbs into the *paſſive*, and the *nominative* caſe of nouns into the *accuſative*, and altering the connexion of ſhort ſentences by different adverbs or conjunctions, and by *ablative* caſes with a prepoſition brought inſtead of the *nominative*, or by *participles* ſometimes put inſtead of the *verbs*, the negation of and the contrary, inſtead of the aſſertion of the thing firſt propoſed, a great variety of forms of ſpeech will be created, which ſhall expreſs the ſame ſenſe.

4. *Acquire a variety of words, a* copia verborum; let your memory be rich in ſynonymous terms or words, expreſſing the ſame happy effect with the variation of the ſame thing: this will not only attain the phraſes in the foregoing direction, but it will add a beauty alſo to your ſtyle, by ſecuring you from an appearance of tautology, or repeating the ſame words

too often, which ſometimes may diſguſt the ear of the learner.

5. *Learn the art of ſhortening your ſentences*, by dividing a long complicated period into two or three ſmall ones. When others connect and join two or three ſentences in one by relative pronouns, as *which*, *whereof*, *wherein*, *whereto*, &c. and by parentheſes frequently inſerted; do you rather divide them into diſtinct periods, or at leaſt if they muſt be united, let it be done rather by conjunctions and copulatives, that they may appear like diſtinct ſentences, and give leſs confuſion to the hearer or reader.

I know no method ſo effectual to learn what I mean, as to take now and then ſome page of an author, who is guilty of ſuch a long involved parenthetical ſtyle, and tranſlate it into plainer Engliſh, by dividing the ideas or the ſentences aſunder, and multiplying the periods, till the language become ſmooth and eaſy, and intelligible at firſt reading.

6. *Talk frequently to young and ignorant perſons, upon ſubjects which are new and unknown to them*, and be diligent to inquire whether they underſtand you or no; this will put you upon changing your phraſes and forms of ſpeech in a variety, till you can hit their capacity, and convey your ideas into their underſtanding.

CHAP. III.

Of convincing other Perſons of any Truth; or delivering them from Errors and Miſtakes.

WHEN we are arrived at a juſt and rational eſtabliſhment in an opinion, whether it relate to religion or common life, we are naturally deſirous of bringing all the world into our ſentiments; and this proceeds from the affectation and pride of ſuperior influence upon the judgment of our fellow-creatures, much more frequently than it does from a ſenſe of duty or love to truth: ſo vicious and corrupt is human

nature. Yet there is ſuch a thing to be found as an honeſt and ſincere delight in propagating truth, ariſing from a dutiful regard to the honour of our Maker, and an hearty love to mankind. Now if we would be ſucceſsful in our attempts to convince men of their errors, and to promote the truth, let us diveſt ourſelves as far as poſſible of that pride and affectation, which I mentioned before, and ſeek to acquire that diſintereſted love to men and zeal for the truth, which will naturally lead us into the beſt methods to promote it. And here the following directions may be uſeful.

I. IF you would convince a perſon of his miſtake, *chooſe a proper place, a happy hour, and the fitteſt concurrent circumſtances for this purpoſe.* Do not unſeaſonably ſet upon him when he has engaged in the midſt of other affairs, but when his ſoul is at liberty, and at leiſure to hear and attend. Accoſt him not upon that ſubject, when his ſpirit is ruffled or diſcompoſed with any occurrences of life, and eſpecially when he has heated his paſſions in the defence of a contrary opinion; but rather ſeize a golden opportunity, when ſome occurrences of life may caſt a favourable aſpect upon the truth of which you would convince him, or which may throw ſome dark and unhappy colour or conſequences upon that error from which you would fain deliver him. There are in life ſome *Molliſſima tempora fundi*, ſome very agreeable moments of addreſſing a perſon, which if rightly managed, may render your attempts more ſucceſsful, and his conviction eaſy and pleaſant.

II. *MAKE it appear by your whole conduct to the perſon you would teach, that you mean him well, that your deſign is not to triumph over his opinion,* nor to expoſe his ignorance, or his incapacity of defending what he aſſerts. Let him ſee that it is not your aim to advance your own character as a diſputant, nor to ſet yourſelf up for an inſtructor to mankind; but that you love him, and ſeek his true intereſt: and not only aſſure him of this in words, when you are entering on an argument with him, but let the whole of

your conduct to him at all times demonſtrate your real friendſhip for him. Truth and argument come with particular force from the mouth of one whom we truſt and love.

III. *THE ſofteſt and gentleſt addreſs to the erroneous, is the beſt way to convince them of their miſtake.* Sometimes it is neceſſary to repreſent to your opponent, that he is not far off from the truth, and that you would fain draw him a little nearer to it; commend and eſtabliſh whatever he ſays that is juſt and true, as our bleſſed Saviour treated the young ſcribe, when he anſwered well concerning the two great commandments; "Thou art not far," ſays our Lord, "from the kingdom of heaven," *Mark* xii. 34. Imitate the mildneſs and conduct of the bleſſed *Jeſus*.

Come as near to your opponent as you can in all your propoſitions, and yield to him as much as you dare, in a conſiſtence with truth and juſtice.

It is a very great and fatal miſtake in perſons who attempt to convince or reconcile others to their party, when they make the difference appear as wide as poſſible: this is ſhocking to any perſon who is to be convinced, he will chooſe rather to keep and maintain his own opinions, if he cannot come into yours without renouncing and abandoning every thing that he believed before. Human nature muſt be flattered a little as well as reaſoned with, that ſo the argument may be able to come at his underſtanding, which otherwiſe will be thruſt off at a diſtance. If you charge a man with nonſenſe and abſurdities, with hereſy and ſelf-contradiction, you take a very wrong ſtep towards convincing him.

Remember that error is not to be rooted out of the mind of man by reproaches and railings, by flaſhes of wit and biting jeſts, by loud exclamations or ſharp ridicule: long declamations and triumph over our neighbour's miſtake, will not prove the way to convince him; theſe are ſigns either of a bad cauſe, or of want of arguments or capacity for the defence of a good one.

IV. *SET therefore a conſtant watch over yourſelf, leſt you grow warm in diſpute before you are aware.* The paſſions never clear the underſtanding, but raiſe darkneſs, clouds, and confuſion in the ſoul: human nature is like water which has mud at the bottom of it, it may be clear while it is calm and undiſturbed, and the ideas like pebbles appear bright at the bottom; but when once it is ſtirred and moved by paſſion, the mud riſes uppermoſt, and ſpreads confuſion and darkneſs over all the ideas; you cannot ſet things in ſo juſt and ſo clear a light before the eyes of your neighbour, while your own conceptions are clouded with heat and paſſion.

Beſides, when your own ſpirits are a little diſturbed, and your wrath is awakened, this naturally kindles the ſame fire in your correſpondent, and prevents him from taking in your ideas, were they ever ſo clear; for his paſſions are engaged all on a ſudden for the defence of his own miſtakes, and they combat as fiercely as yours do, which perhaps may be awakened on the ſide of truth.

To provoke a perſon whom you would convince, not only rouſes his anger, and ſets it againſt your doctrine; but directs its reſentment againſt your perſon, as well as againſt all your inſtructions and arguments. You muſt treat an opponent like a friend, if you would perſuade him to learn any thing from you; and this is one great reaſon why there is ſo little ſucceſs on either ſide between two diſputants or controverſial writers, becauſe they are ſo ready to intereſt their paſſions in the ſubject of conteſt, and prevent the mutual light that might be given and received on either ſide: ambition, indignation, and a profeſſed zeal, reign on both ſides: victory is the point deſigned, while truth is pretended, and truth oftentimes periſhes in the fray, or retires from the field of battle: the combatants end juſt where they began, the underſtandings hold faſt the ſame opinions; perhaps with this diſadvantage, that they are a little more obſtinate, and rooted in them without freſh reaſon, and they

generally come off with the loſs of temper and charity.

V. *NEITHER attempt nor hope to convince a perſon of his miſtake, by any penal methods or ſevere uſage:* there is no light brought into the mind by all the fire and ſword, and bloody perſecutions that were ever introduced into the world. One would think that the princes, the prieſts, and the people, the learned and the unlearned, the great and the mean, ſhould have all, by this time, ſeen the folly and madneſs of ſeeking to propagate the truth by the laws of cruelty: we compel a beaſt to the yoke by blows, becauſe the ox and the aſs have no underſtanding; but intellectual powers are not to be fettered and compelled at this rate: men cannot believe what they will, nor change their religion and their ſentiments as they pleaſe; they may be made hypocrites by the forms of ſeverity, and conſtrained to profeſs what they do not believe; they may be forced to comply with external practices and ceremonies, contrary to their own conſciences; but this can never pleaſe God, nor profit men.

VI. In order to convince another, you ſhould always *make choice of thoſe arguments that are beſt ſuited to his underſtanding and capacity, his genius and temper, his ſtate, ſtation, and circumſtances.* If I were to perſuade a ploughman of the truth of any form of church-government, it ſhould not be attempted by the uſe of the *Greek* and *Latin* fathers; but from the word of God, the light of nature, and the common reaſon of things.

VII. *ARGUMENTS ſhould* always *be propoſed in ſuch a manner, as may lead the mind onward to perceive the truth in a clear and agreeable light,* as well as to conſtrain the aſſent by the power of reaſoning. Clear ideas in many caſes, are as uſeful toward conviction, as a well-formed and unanſwerable ſyllogiſm.

VIII. *ALLOW the perſon you deſire to inſtruct a reaſonable time to enter into the force of your argument.* When you have declared your own ſentiments in the brighteſt manner of illuſtration, and enforced them

with the moſt convincing arguments, you are not to ſuppoſe that your friends ſhould immediately be convinced and receive the truth: habitude in a particular way of thinking, as well as in moſt other things, obtains the force of nature, and you cannot expect to wean a man from his accuſtomed errors but by ſlow degrees, and by his own aſſiſtance; entreat him therefore not to judge on the ſudden, nor determine againſt you at once, but that he would pleaſe to review your ſcheme, reflect upon your arguments with all the impartiality he is capable of, and take time to think theſe over again at large; at leaſt that he would be diſpoſed to hear you ſpeak yet further on this ſubject, without pain or averſion.

Addreſs him therefore in an obliging manner, and ſay, I am not ſo fond as to think I have placed the ſubject in ſuch lights, as to throw you on a ſudden into a new track of thinking, or to make you immediately lay aſide your preſent opinions or deſigns; all that I hope is, that ſome hint or other which I have given, is capable of being improved by you to your own conviction, or poſſibly it may lead you into ſuch a train of reaſoning, as in time to effect a change in your thoughts. Which hint leads me to add,

IX. *LABOUR as much as poſſible to make the perſon you would teach, his own inſtructor.* Human nature may be allured, by a ſecret pleaſure and pride in its own reaſoning, to ſeem to find out by itſelf the very thing that you would teach; and there are ſome perſons that have ſo much of this natural bias towards ſelf rooted in them, that they can never be convinced of a miſtake by the plaineſt and ſtrongeſt arguments to the contrary, though the demonſtration glare in their faces; but they may be tempted by ſuch gentle inſinuations to follow a track of thought, which you propoſe, till they have wound themſelves out of their own error, and led themſelves hereby into your opinion; if you do but let it appear, that they are under their own guidance rather than yours. And perhaps there is nothing which ſhews

more dexterity of addreſs, than this ſecret influence over the minds of others, which they do not diſcern even while they follow it.

X. *IF you can gain the main point in queſtion, be not very ſolicitous about the nicety with which it ſhall be expreſſed.* Mankind is ſo vain a thing, that it is not willing to derive from another, and though it cannot have every thing from itſelf, yet it would ſeem at leaſt to mingle ſomething of its own with what it derives elſewhere: therefore when you have ſet your ſentiment in the fulleſt light, and proved it in the moſt effectual manner, an opponent will bring in ſome frivolous and uſeleſs diſtinction on purpoſe to change the form of words in the queſtion, and acknowledge that he receives your propoſition in ſuch a ſenſe, and in ſuch a manner of expreſſion, though he cannot receive it in your terms and phraſes. *Vanillus* will confeſs he is now convinced, that a man who behaves well in the ſtate, ought not to be puniſhed for his religion; but yet he will not conſent to allow an univerſal toleration of all religions that do not injure the ſtate, which is the propoſition I had been proving. Well, let *Vanillus* therefore uſe his own language, I am glad he is convinced of the truth; he ſhall have leave to dreſs it in his own way.

To theſe directions I ſhall add two remarks in the concluſion of this chapter, which would not ſo properly fall under the preceding directions.

1. *Rem.* WHEN you have laboured to inſtruct a perſon in ſome controverted truth, and yet he retains ſome prejudice againſt it, ſo that he doth not yield to the convincing force of your arguments, you may ſometimes have happy ſucceſs in convincing him of that truth, by ſetting him to read a weak author, who writes againſt it. A young reader will find ſuch pleaſure in being able to anſwer the arguments of the oppoſer, that he will drop his former prejudices againſt the truth, and yield to the power and evidence of your reaſons. I confeſs this looks like ſet-

ting up one prejudice to overthrow another; but where prejudices cannot be fairly removed by dint of reason, the wiſeſt and beſt of teachers will ſometimes find it neceſſary to make a way for reaſon and truth to take place by this contraſt of prejudices.

II. *Rem.* When our deſign is to *convince a whole family, or community of perſons* of any miſtake, or to lead them into any truth, we may juſtly ſuppoſe there are *various* reigning prejudices among them; and therefore it is not ſafe to attempt, nor ſo eaſy to effect it, *by addreſſing the whole number at once.* Such a method has been often found to raiſe a ſudden alarm, and has produced a violent oppoſition even to the moſt fair, pious, and uſeful propoſal; ſo that he who made the motion, could never carry his point.

We muſt therefore firſt make as ſure as we can of the moſt intelligent and learned, at leaſt the moſt leading perſons amongſt them, by addreſſing them apart prudently, and offering proper reaſons, till they are convinced and engaged on the ſide of truth; and theſe may with more ſucceſs apply themſelves to others of the ſame community; yet the original propoſer ſhould not neglect to make a diſtinct application to all the reſt, ſo far as circumſtances admit.

Where a thing is to be determined *by a number of votes,* he ſhould labour to ſecure a *good majority,* and then take care that the moſt proper perſons ſhould move and argue the matter in public, leſt it be quaſhed in the very firſt propoſal by ſome prejudice againſt the propoſer.

So unhappily are our circumſtances ſituated in this world, that if *truth,* and *juſtice,* and *goodneſs* could put on human forms, and deſcend from heaven to propoſe the moſt divine and uſeful doctrines, and bring with them the cleareſt evidence, and publiſh them at once to a multitude whoſe prejudices are engaged againſt them, the propoſal would be vain and fruitleſs, and would neither convince nor perſuade. So neceſſary is it to join *art and dexterity,* together with the *force of*

reaſon, to convince mankind of truth, unleſs we came furniſhed with miracles or omnipotence to create a conviction *.

CHAP. IV.

Of Authority, of the Abuſe of it, and of its real and proper Uſe and Service.

THE influence which other perſons have upon our opinions, is uſually called *authority*. The power of it is ſo great and widely extenſive, that there is ſcarcely any perſon in the world entirely free from the impreſſion of it, even after their utmoſt watchfulneſs and care to avoid it. Our *parents* and *tutors*, yea our very *nurſes* determine a multitude of our ſentiments; our *friends*, our *neighbours*, the *cuſtom of the country* where we dwell, and the *eſtabliſhed opinions of mankind*, form our belief; the *great*, the *pious*, the *learned*, and the *ancient*, the *king*, the *prieſt*, and the *philoſopher*, are characters of mighty efficacy to perſuade us to receive what they dictate. Theſe may be ranked under different *heads of prejudice*, but they are all of a kindred nature, and may be reduced to this one ſpring or head of *authority*.

I have treated of theſe particularly in *Logic*, Part II. Chap. III. Sec. 4th. Yet a few other *remarks* occurring among my papers, I thought it not improper to let them find a place here.

Cicero was well acquainted with the unhappy influences of *authority*, and complains of it in his firſt book, *De Natura Deorum*. "In diſputes and controverſies (ſays he) it is not ſo much the author, or

* The conduct of Chriſt and his apoſtles (armed as they were with ſupernatural powers), in the gradual openings of truth, againſt which the minds of their diſciples were ſtrongly prejudiced, may not only ſecure ſuch an addreſs from the imputation of diſhoneſt craft, but may demonſtrate the expediency, and in ſome caſes the neceſſity, of attending to it.

" patrons of any opinion, as the weight and force of " argument, which ſhould influence the mind. The " authority of thoſe who teach, is a frequent hinder- " ance to thoſe who learn, becauſe they utterly neglect " to exerciſe their own judgment, taking for granted " whatſoever others whom they reverence have judged " for them. I can by no means approve, what we " learn from the *Pythagoreans*, that if any thing aſ- " ſerted in diſputation was queſtioned, they were " wont to anſwer, *Ipſe dixit*, i. e. *He himſelf ſaid ſo*, " meaning *Pythagoras*. So far did prejudice prevail, " that authority without reaſon was ſufficient to de- " termine diſputes and to eſtabliſh truth.

All human authority, though it be ever ſo ancient, though it hath had univerſal ſovereignty, and ſwayed all the learned and the vulgar world for ſome thouſands of years, yet has no certain and undoubted claim to truth: nor is it any violation of good manners, to enter a *caveat* with due decency againſt its pretended dominion. What is there among all the ſciences that has been longer eſtabliſhed and more univerſally received ever ſince the days of *Ariſtotle*, and perhaps for ages before he lived, than this, that *all heavy bodies whatſoever tend toward the centre of the earth?* But Sir *Iſaac Newton* has found that thoſe bulky and weighty bodies, the *earth* and all the *planets*, *tend toward the centre of the ſun*, whereby, the authority of near three thouſand years or more is not only called in queſtion, but actually refuted and renounced.

Again, Was ever any thing more univerſally agreed among the nation of the poets and critics, than that *Homer* and *Virgil* are inimitable writers of heroic *poems?* And whoever preſumed to attack their writings or their reputation, was either condemned for his malice or derided for his folly. Theſe ancient authors have been ſuppoſed to derive peculiar advantages to aggrandize their verſes from the *Heathen theology*, and that variety of appearances in which they could repreſent their gods, and mingle them with the affairs of men: yet within theſe few years Sir *Richard Black-*

more (whoſe *prefaces* are univerſally eſteemed ſuperior in their kind to any of his *poems*) has ventured to pronounce ſome noble truths in that excellent preface to his poem called *Alfred*, and has bravely demonſtrated there, beyond all poſſible exception, that both *Virgil* and *Homer* are often guilty of very groſs blunders, indecencies, and ſhameful improprieties; and that they were ſo far from deriving any advantage from the rabble of *Heathen gods*, that their theology almoſt unavoidably expoſed them to many of thoſe blunders; and that it is not poſſible upon the foot of *Gentile ſuperſtition*, to write a perfect *epic poem*: whereas the ſacred religion of the Bible, would furniſh a poem with much more juſt and glorious ſcenes and a nobler machinery.

Mr. *Dennis* alſo had made it appear in his *eſſays* ſome years before, that there were no images ſo ſublime in the brighteſt of the *Heathen* writers, as thoſe with which we are furniſhed in the poetic parts of the holy ſcripture: and *Rapin*, the *French* critic, dared to profeſs the ſame ſentiments, notwithſtanding the world of *poets* and *critics* had ſo univerſally and unanimouſly exalted the Heathen writers to the ſovereignty for ſo many ages. If we would find out the truth in many caſes, we muſt dare to deviate from the long-beaten track, and venture to think with a juſt and unbiaſſed liberty.

Though it be neceſſary to guard againſt the evil influences of *authority*, and the prejudices derived thence, becauſe it has introduced thouſands of errors and miſchiefs into the world, yet there are three eminent and remarkable caſes wherein *authority*, or the ſentiments of other perſons, muſt or will determine the judgments and practice of mankind.

I. *PARENTS are appointed to judge for their children* in their younger years, and to inſtruct them what they ſhould believe, and what they ſhould practiſe in the civil and religious life. This is a *dictate of nature*, and doubtleſs it would have been ſo in a ſtate of innocence. It is impoſſible that children ſhould be capable

of judging for themſelves, before their minds are furniſhed with a competent number of ideas, before they are acquainted with any principles and rules of juſt judgment, and before their reaſon is grown up to any degrees of maturity and proper exerciſes upon ſuch ſubjects.

I will not ſay, that a child ought to believe *nonſenſe* and *impoſſibility*, becauſe his father bids him; for ſo far as the impoſſibility appears, he cannot believe it: nor will I ſay, he ought to aſſent to all the falſe opinions of his parents, or to practiſe idolatry and murder, or miſchief, at their command: yet a child knows not any better way to find out what he ſhould believe and what he ſhould practiſe, before he can poſſibly judge for himſelf, than to run to his parents, and receive their ſentiments and their directions.

You will ſay, This is hard indeed, that the child of a *Heathen idolater*, or a cruel *cannibal*, is laid under a ſort of neceſſity by nature of ſinning againſt the light of nature. I grant it is hard indeed, but it is only owing to our original fall and apoſtaſy: the law of nature continues as it was in innocence, namely, that a parent ſhould judge for his child; but, if the parent judges ill, the child is greatly expoſed by it, through that univerſal diſorder that is brought into the world by the ſin of *Adam*, our common father: and from the equity and goodneſs of God we may reaſonably infer, that the great Judge of all will do right; he will balance the ignorance and incapacity of the child, with the criminal nature of the offence in thoſe puerile inſtances, and will not puniſh beyond juſt demerit.

Beſides, what could God, as a Creator, do better for children in their minority, than to commit them to the care and inſtruction of parents: none are ſuppoſed to be ſo much concerned for the happineſs of children as their parents are; therefore it is the ſafeſt ſtep to happineſs, according to the original law of creation, to follow their directions, their parents reaſon acting for them, before they have reaſon of their own in proper

exercise; nor indeed is there any better *general rule* in our fallen state, by which children are capable of being governed, though in many particular cases it may lead them far astray from virtue and happiness.

If children by providence be cast under some happier instructions, contrary to their parents erroneous opinions, I cannot say it is the duty of such children to follow error, when they discern it to be error, because their father believes it; what I said before, is to be interpreted only of those that are under the immediate care and education of their parents, and not yet arrived at years capable of examination; I know not how these can be freed from receiving the dictates of parental authority in their youngest years, except by immediate or divine inspiration.

It is hard to say, at what exact time of life the child is exempted from the sovereignty of parental dictates. Perhaps it is much juster to suppose, that this sovereignty diminishes by degrees as the child grows in understanding and capacity, and is more and more capable of exerting his own intellectual powers, than to limit this matter by months and years.

When childhood and youth are so far expired, that the reasoning faculties are grown up to any just measure of maturity, it is certain that persons ought to begin to inquire into the reasons of their own faith and practice in all the affairs of life and religion; but as reason does not arrive at this power and self-sufficiency in any single moment of time, so there is no single moment when a child should at once cast off all its former beliefs and practices; but by degrees and in slow succession he should examine them, as opportunity and advantages offer; and either confirm, or doubt of, or change them, according to the leadings of conscience and reason, with all its best advantages of information.

When we are arrived at manly age, there is no person on earth, no set or society of men whatsoever, that have power and authority given them by God, the Creator and Governor of the world, absolutely to dic-

tate to others their opinions or practices in the moral and religious life. God has given every man reaſon to judge for himſelf, in higher or in lower degrees. Where leſs is given, leſs will be required. But we are juſtly chargeable with criminal ſloth, and miſimprovement of the talents with which our Creator has intruſted us, if we take all things for granted which others aſſert, and believe and practiſe all things which they dictate, without due examination.

II. ANOTHER caſe, wherein *authority* muſt govern our aſſent, is in many *matters of fact*. Here we may and ought to be determined by the declarations or narratives of other men; though I muſt confeſs, this is uſually called *teſtimony* rather than *authority*. It is upon this foot, that every ſon or daughter among mankind, are required to believe that ſuch and ſuch perſons are their parents, for they can never be informed of it but by the dictates of others. It is by *teſtimony* that we are to believe the laws of our country, and to pay all proper deference to the prince, and to magiſtrates, in ſubordinate degrees of authority, though we did not actually ſee them choſen, crowned, or inveſted with their title and character. It is by *teſtimony* that we are neceſſitated to believe there is ſuch a city as *Canterbury* or *York*, though perhaps we have never been at either; that there are ſuch perſons as Papiſts at *Paris* and *Rome*, and that there are many ſottiſh and cruel tenets in their religion. It is by *teſtimony* we believe that Chriſtianity and the books of the Bible, have been faithfully delivered down to us through many generations; that there was ſuch a perſon as *Chriſt* our Saviour, that he wrought miracles, and died on the croſs, that he roſe again and aſcended to heaven.

The authority or *teſtimony* of men, if they are wiſe and honeſt, if they had full opportunities and capacities of knowing the truth, and are free from all ſuſpicion of deceit in relating it, ought to ſway our aſſent; eſpecially when multitudes concur in the ſame teſtimony, and when there are many other attending circum-

ſtances that raiſe the propoſition which they dictate to the degree of *moral certainty*.

But in this very caſe, even in matters of fact and affairs of hiſtory, we ſhould not too eaſily give in to all the dictates of tradition, and the pompous pretences to the teſtimony of men, till we have fairly examined the ſeveral things which are neceſſary to make up a credible teſtimony, and to lay a juſt foundation for our belief. There are and have been ſo many falſehoods impoſed upon mankind, with ſpecious pretences of eye and ear witneſſes, that ſhould make us wiſely cautious and juſtly ſuſpicious of reports, where the concurrent ſigns of truth do not fairly appear, and eſpecially where the matter is of conſiderable importance. And the leſs probable the fact teſtified is in itſelf, the greater evidence may we juſtly demand of the veracity of that teſtimony on which it claims to be admitted.

III. The laſt caſe wherein *authority* muſt govern us is, when we are called to believe what perſons under inſpiration have dictated to us. This is not properly the *authority* of men, but of God himſelf; and we are obliged to believe what that authority aſſerts, though our reaſon at preſent may not be able any other way to diſcover the certainty or evidence of the propoſition: It is enough if our faculty of reaſon, in its beſt exerciſe, can diſcover the divine authority which has propoſed it. Where doctrines of divine revelation are plainly publiſhed, together with ſufficient proofs of their revelation, all mankind are bound to receive them, though they cannot perfectly underſtand them; for we know that God is true, and cannot dictate falſehood.

But if theſe pretended dictates are directly contrary to the natural faculties of underſtanding and reaſon which God has given us, we may be well aſſured theſe dictates were never revealed to us by God himſelf. When perſons are really influenced by authority to believe pretended myſteries, in plain oppoſition to reaſon, and yet pretend reaſon for what they believe, this is but a vain amuſement.

There is no reaſon whatſoever that can prove or eſtabliſh any authority ſo firmly, as to give it power to dictate in matters of belief, what *is contrary to all the dictates of our reaſonable nature.* God himſelf has never given us any ſuch revelations; and I think it may be ſaid, with reverence, he neither can nor will do it, unleſs he changes our faculties from what they are at preſent. To tell us we muſt believe a propoſition which is plainly contrary to reaſon, is to tell us that we muſt believe two ideas are joined, while (if we attend to reaſon) we plainly ſee and know them to be disjoined.

What could ever have eſtabliſhed the nonſenſe of *tranſubſtantiation* in the world, if men had been fixed in this great truth, that *God gives no revelation contradictory to our own reaſon?* things may be *above our reaſon*, that is, reaſon may have but obſcure ideas of them, or reaſon may not ſee the connexion of theſe ideas, or may not know at preſent the certain and exact manner of reconciling ſuch propoſitions either with one another, or with other rational truths, as I have explained in ſome of my logical papers: but when they ſtand directly and plainly *againſt all ſenſe* and *reaſon*, as *tranſubſtantiation* does, no divine authority can be pretended to enforce their belief, and human authority is impudent to pretend to it. Yet this human authority, in the *Popiſh* countries, has prevailed over millions of ſouls, becauſe they have abandoned their reaſon, they have given up the glory of human nature to be trampled upon by knaves, and ſo reduced themſelves to the condition of brutes.

It is by this amuſement of authority (ſays a certain author) that the *horſe* is taught to obey the words of command, a *dog* to fetch and carry, and a man to believe inconſiſtencies and impoſſibilities. Whips and dungeons, fire and the gibbet, and the ſolemn terrors of eternal miſery after this life, will perſuade weak minds to believe againſt their ſenſes, and in direct contradiction to all their reaſoning powers. A *parrot* is taught to tell lies with much more eaſe and more gentle uſage; but none of all theſe creatures would

ſerve their maſters at the expence of their liberty, had they but knowledge and the juſt uſe of reaſon.

I have mentioned three caſes, wherein mankind muſt or will be determined in their ſentiments by authority; that is, the *caſe of children* in their minority, in regard of the *commands of their parents*; the caſe of all men with regard to univerſal, complete, and *ſufficient teſtimony of matter of fact*; and the caſe of every perſon, with regard to the *authority of divine revelation*, and of men divinely inſpired; and under each of theſe I have given ſuch *limitations* and *cautions* as were neceſſary.

I proceed now to mention ſome other caſes, wherein we ought to pay a great deference to the authority and ſentiments of others, though we are not abſolutely concluded and determined by their opinions.

1. When we begin to paſs out of our minority, and to judge for ourſelves in matters of the civil and religious life, we ought to pay very great deference to the ſentiments of our *parents*, who in the time of our minority were our natural guides and directors in theſe matters. So in matters of ſcience, an ignorant and unexperienced youth ſhould pay great deference to the opinions of his *inſtructors*: and though he may juſtly ſuſpend his judgment in matters which his tutors dictate, till he perceive ſufficient evidence for them; yet neither parents nor tutors ſhould be directly oppoſed without great and moſt evident reaſons, ſuch as conſtrain the underſtanding or conſcience of thoſe concerned.

2. Perſons of years and long experience of human affairs, when they give advice in matters of prudence or civil conduct, ought to have a conſiderable deference paid to their authority by thoſe that are young and have not ſeen the world, for it is moſt probable that the elder perſons are in the right.

3. In the affairs of practical godlineſs, there ſhould be much deference given to perſons of long ſtanding in virtue and piety. I confeſs in the particular forms and ceremonies of religion, there may be as much bigotry and ſuperſtition amongſt the old as the young;

but in queſtions of inward religion and pure devotion, or virtue, a man who has been long engaged in the ſincere practice of thoſe things, is juſtly preſumed to know more than a youth with all his ungoverned paſſions, appetites, and prejudices about him.

4. Men in their ſeveral profeſſions and arts, in which they have been educated, and in which they have employed themſelves all their days, muſt be ſuppoſed to have greater knowledge and ſkill than others; and therefore there is due reſpect to be paid to their judgment in thoſe matters.

5. In matters of fact, where there is not ſufficient teſtimony to conſtrain our aſſent, yet there ought to be due deference paid to the narratives of perſons wiſe and ſober, according to the degrees of their honeſty, ſkill, and opportunity to acquaint themſelves therewith.

I confeſs in many of theſe caſes, where the propoſition is a mere matter of ſpeculation, and doth not neceſſarily draw practice along with it, we may delay our aſſent till better evidence appear; but where the matter is of a practical nature, and requires us to act one way or another, we ought to pay much deference to authority or teſtimony, and follow ſuch probabilities where we have no certainty; for this is the beſt light we have, and ſurely it is better to follow ſuch ſort of guidance, where we can have no better, than to wander and fluctuate in abſolute uncertainty. It is not reaſonable to put out our candle, and ſit ſtill in the dark, becauſe we have not the light of ſunbeams.

CHAP. V.

Of treating and managing the Prejudices of Men *.

IF we had nothing but the *reaſon* of men to deal with, and that *reaſon* were pure and uncorrupted, it would then be a matter of no great ſkill or labour to convince another perſon of common miſtakes, or to perſuade him to aſſent to plain and obvious truths. But alas! mankind ſtand wrapt round in *errors*, and intrenched in *prejudices*; and every one of their opinions is ſupported and guarded by ſomething elſe beſide *reaſon*. A young bright genius, who has furniſhed himſelf with a variety of truths and ſtrong arguments, but is yet unacquainted with the world, goes forth from the ſchools like a *knight errant*, preſuming bravely to vanquiſh the follies of men, and to ſcatter light and truth through all his acquaintance. But he meets with huge giants and enchanted caſtles, ſtrong prepoſſeſſions of mind, habits, cuſtoms, educations, authority, intereſt, together with all the various paſſions of men, armed and obſtinate to defend their old opinions; and he is ſtrangely diſappointed in his generous attempts. He finds now that he muſt not truſt merely to the ſharpneſs of his ſteel, and to the ſtrength of his arm, but he muſt manage the weapons of his reaſon with much dexterity and artifice, with ſkill and addreſs, or he ſhall never be able to ſubdue errors and to convince mankind.

Where *prejudices* are ſtrong, there are theſe ſeveral *methods* to be practiſed in order to convince perſons of their miſtakes, and make a way for truth to enter into their minds.

* For the nature and cauſes of prejudices, and for the preventing or curing them in ourſelves, ſee the Doctor's Syſtem of *Logic*, Part II. Chap. III. *Of the ſprings of falſe judgment, or the doctrine of prejudices.*

I. *BY avoiding the power and influence of the prejudice, without any direct attack upon it:* and this is done, by chooſing all the ſlow, ſoft, and diſtant methods of propoſing your own ſentiments, and your arguments for them, and by degrees leading the perſon ſtep by ſtep into thoſe truths which his prejudices would not bear if they were propoſed all at once.

Perhaps your neighbour is under the influence of *ſuperſtition and bigotry in the ſimplicity of his ſoul;* you muſt not immediately run upon him with violence, and ſhew him the abſurdity or folly of his own opinions, though you might be able to ſet them in a glaring light: but you muſt rather begin at a diſtance, and eſtabliſh his aſſent to ſome familiar and eaſy propoſitions, which have a tendency to refute his miſtakes, and to confirm the truth; and then ſilently obſerve what impreſſion this makes upon him, and proceed by ſlow degrees as he is able to bear; and you muſt carry on the work, perhaps at diſtant ſeaſons of converſation. The tender or diſeaſed eye cannot bear a deluge of light at once.

Therefore we are not to conſider our arguments merely *according to our own notions of their force*, and from thence expect the immediate conviction of others; but we ſhould regard *how they are likely to be received by the perſons we converſe with;* and thus manage our reaſoning, as the nurſe gives a child drink by ſlow degrees, leſt the infant ſhould be choked or return it all back again, if poured in too haſtily. If your wine be ever ſo good, and you are ever ſo liberal in beſtowing it on your neighbour, yet if his bottle into which you attempt to pour it with freedom has a narrow mouth, you will ſooner overſet the bottle, than fill it with wine.

Over-haſtineſs and vehemence in arguing is oftentimes the effect of *pride;* it blunts the poignancy of the argument, breaks its force, and diſappoints the end. If you were to convince a perſon of the falſehood of the *doctrine of tranſubſtantiation*, and you take up the conſecrated bread before him and ſay, "You may ſee, and

" taſte, and feel, *this is nothing but bread*; therefore " whilſt you aſſert that God commands you to believe " *it is not bread*, you moſt wickedly accuſe God of " commanding you to tell a lie." This ſort of language would only raiſe the indignation of the perſon againſt you, inſtead of making any impreſſions upon him. He will not ſo much as think at all on the argument you have brought, but he rages at you as a *profane wretch*, ſetting up your own ſenſe and reaſon above ſacred authority; ſo that though what you affirm is a truth of great evidence, yet you loſe the benefit of your whole argument by an ill management, and the unſeaſonable uſe of it.

II. We may *expreſsly allow and indulge thoſe prejudices for a ſeaſon, which ſeem to ſtand againſt the truth*, and *endeavour to introduce the truth by degrees* while thoſe prejudices are expreſsly allowed, *till by degrees the advancing truth may of itſelf wear out the prejudice*. Thus God himſelf dealt with his own people the *Jews* after the reſurrection of *Chriſt*; for though from the following days of *Pentecoſt* when the goſpel was proclaimed and confirmed at *Jeruſalem*, the *Jewiſh* ceremonies began to be void and ineffectual for any divine purpoſe, yet the *Jews* who received Chriſt the Meſſiah were permitted to circumciſe their children, and to practiſe many *Levitical* forms, till that conſtitution which then *waxed old* ſhould in time *vaniſh away*.

Where the prejudices of mankind cannot be conquered at once, but they will riſe up in arms againſt the evidence of truth, we muſt make ſome allowances, and yield to them for the preſent, as far as we can ſafely do it without real injury to truth: and if we would have any ſucceſs in our endeavours to convince the world, we muſt practiſe this complaiſance for the benefit of mankind.

Take a ſtudent who has deeply imbibed the principles of the *Peripatetics*, and imagines certain immaterial beings, called *ſubſtantial forms*, to inhabit every herb, flower, mineral, metal, fire, water, *&c.* and to be the ſpring of all its properties and operations; or

take a *Platoniſt* who believes an *anima mundi*, an univerſal ſoul of the world to pervade all bodies, to act in and by them according to their nature, and indeed to give them their nature and their ſpecial powers; perhaps it may be very hard to convince theſe perſons by arguments, and conſtrain them to yield up theſe fancies. Well then, let the one believe his *univerſal ſoul*, and the other go on with his notion of *ſubſtantial forms*, and at the ſame time teach them how by certain original laws of motion, and the various ſizes, ſhapes, and ſituations of the parts of matter, allowing a continued divine concourſe in and with all, the ſeveral appearances in nature may be ſolved, and the variety of effects produced, according to the corpuſcular philoſophy, improved by *Deſcartes*, Mr. *Boyle*, and Sir *Iſaac Newton*; and when they have attained a degree of ſkill in this ſcience, they will ſee theſe airy notions of theirs, theſe imaginary powers, to be ſo uſeleſs and unneceſſary, that they will drop them of their own accord: the *Peripatetic forms* will vaniſh from the mind like a dream, and the *Platonic ſoul of the world* will expire.

Or ſuppoſe a young philoſopher under a powerful perſuaſion that there *is nothing but what has three dimenſions, length, breadth, and thickneſs*, and conſequently that *every finite being has a figure or ſhape* (for *ſhape* is but the term and boundary of dimenſion): ſuppoſe this perſon, through the long prejudices of ſenſe and imagination, cannot be eaſily brought to conceive of a *ſpirit*, or a *thinking being* without *ſhape* and *dimenſions*; let him then continue to conceive a *ſpirit with dimenſions*; but be ſure in all his conceptions to retain the idea of *cogitation*, or a *power of thinking*, and thus proceed to philoſophize upon the ſubject. Perhaps in a little time he will find that *length*, *breadth*, and *ſhape*, have no ſhare in any of the actions of a ſpirit; and that he can manifeſt all the properties and relations of ſuch a being, with all its operations of ſenſation, volition, *&c.* to be as well performed without the uſe of this ſuppoſed *ſhape* or theſe *dimenſions*; and that all theſe operations

and theſe attributes may be aſcribed to a *ſpirit*, conſidered merely as a *power of thinking*. And when he further conceives that *God*, the infinite Spirit, is an *almighty, ſelf-exiſting, thinking power, without ſhape and dimenſions of length, breadth, and depth*, he may then ſuppoſe the human ſpirit may be an inferior *ſelf-ſubſiſting power of thought*; and he may be inclined to drop the ideas of *dimenſion and figure* by degrees, when he ſees and is convinced they do nothing towards *thinking*, nor are they neceſſary to aſſiſt or explain the operations or properties of a ſpirit.

I may give another inſtance of the ſame practice, where there is a prejudicate fondneſs of particular words and phraſes. Suppoſe a man is educated in an *unhappy form of ſpeech*, whereby he explains ſome *great doctrine of the goſpel*, and by the means of this phraſe he has imbibed a very falſe idea of that doctrine: yet he is ſo bigotted to his form of words, that he imagines if thoſe words are omitted the doctrine is loſt. Now, if I cannot poſſibly perſuade him to part with his improper terms, I will indulge them a little, and try to explain them in a ſcriptural ſenſe, rather than let him go on in his miſtaken ideas.

Credonius believes that *Chriſt deſcended into hell:* I think the word *hell*, as now commonly underſtood, is very improper here; but ſince the bulk of Chriſtians, and *Credonius* among them, will by no means part with the word out of their *Engliſh* creed, I will explain the word *hell* to ſignify the *ſtate of the dead*, or the *ſeparate ſtate of ſouls*; and thus lead my friend into more juſt ideas of the truth, *namely, that the ſoul of Chriſt exiſted three days in the ſtate of ſeparation from his body*, or was in the inviſible world, which might be originally called *hell* in *Engliſh*, as well as *hades* in *Greek*.

Anilla has been bred a *Papiſt* all her days, and though ſhe does not know much of religion, yet ſhe reſolves never to part from the *Roman Catholic faith*, and is obſtinately bent againſt a change. Now I cannot think it unlawful to teach her the true Chriſtian, that is, the *Proteſtant religion*, out of the *Epiſtle to the Romans*, and

ſhew her that the ſame doctrine is contained in the *Catholic Epiſtles of St. Peter, James, and Jude*; and thus let her live and die a good Chriſtian, in the *belief* of the religion I teach her out of the New Teſtament, while ſhe imagines ſhe is a *Roman Catholic* ſtill, becauſe ſhe finds the doctrine ſhe is taught in the *Catholic Epiſtles*, and in that to the *Romans*.

I grant it is moſt proper there ſhould be different words (as far as poſſible) applied to different ideas; and this rule ſhould never be diſpenſed with, if we had to do only with the *reaſon of mankind*; but their various *prejudices* and *zeal for ſome party-phraſes*, ſometimes make it neceſſary that we ſhould lead them into truth under the covert of their own beloved forms of ſpeech, rather than permit them to live and die obſtinate and unconvincible in any dangerous miſtake: whereas an attempt to deprive them of their old eſtabliſhed words, would raiſe ſuch a tumult within them, as to render their conviction hopeleſs.

III. SOMETIMES we may *make uſe of the very prejudices under which a perſon labours, in order to convince him of ſome particular truth, and argue with him upon his own profeſſed principles* as though they were true. This is called, *argumentum ad hominem*, and is another way of dealing with the prejudices of men.

Suppoſe a *Jew* lies ſick of a fever, and is forbidden fleſh by his phyſician; but hearing that rabbits were provided for the dinner of the family, deſired earneſtly to eat of them; and ſuppoſe he became impatient becauſe his phyſician did not permit him, and he inſiſted upon it, that it could do him no hurt: ſurely rather than let him perſiſt in that fancy and that deſire, to the danger of his life, I would tell him that *theſe animals were ſtrangled*, which ſort of food was forbidden by the *Jewiſh law*, though I myſelf may believe that law is now aboliſhed.

In the ſame manner was *Tenerilla* perſuaded to let *Damon* her huſband proſecute a thief, who broke open their houſe on a *Sunday*. At firſt ſhe abhorred the thoughts of it, and refuſed it utterly, becauſe if the

thief were condemned, according to the *Engliſh* law, he muſt be hanged; whereas (ſaid ſhe) the law of God in the writings of *Moſes*, does not appoint death to be the puniſhment of ſuch criminals, but tells us, that *a thief ſhall be ſold for his theft*, Exod. xxii. 3. But when *Damon* could no other ways convince her that the thief ought to be proſecuted, he put her in mind that the theft was committed on a *Sunday* morning; now the ſame law of *Moſes* requires, that the *Sabbath-breaker ſhall ſurely be put to death*, Exod. xxxi. 15. Numb. xv. 35. This argument prevailed with *Tenerilla*, and ſhe conſented to the proſecution.

Encrates uſed the ſame means of conviction when he ſaw a *Mahometan* drink wine to exceſs, and heard him maintain the lawfulneſs and pleaſure of drunkenneſs: *Encrates* reminded him, that his own prophet *Mahomet* had utterly forbidden all wine to his followers; and the good man reſtrained his vicious appetite by his ſuperſtition, when he could no otherwiſe convince him that *drunkenneſs was unlawful*, nor withhold him from exceſs.

Where we find any perſon obſtinately perſiſting in a miſtake in oppoſition to all reaſon, eſpecially if the miſtake be very injurious or pernicious, and we know this perſon will hearken to the ſentiment or authority of ſome favourite name, it is needful ſometimes to urge the *opinion and authority* of that favourite perſon, ſince that is likely to be regarded much more than *reaſon*. I confeſs I am almoſt aſhamed to ſpeak of uſing any *influence of authority*, while I would teach the *art of reaſoning*. But in ſome caſes it is better that poor, ſilly, perverſe, obſtinate creatures ſhould be perſuaded to judge and act right, by a veneration for the ſenſe of others, than to be left to wander in pernicious errors, and continue deaf to all argument and blind to all evidence. They are but children of a larger ſize; and ſince they perſiſt all their lives in their minority, and reject all true reaſoning, ſurely we may try to perſuade them to practiſe what is for their own intereſt by ſuch childiſh reaſons as they will hearken to: we may overawe them from purſuing their own ruin by the terrors

of a ſolemn ſhadow, or allure them by a ſugar-plum to their own happineſs.

But after all, we muſt conclude, that whereſoever it can be done, it is beſt to *remove and root out thoſe prejudices* which obſtruct the entrance of truth into the mind, rather than to palliate, humour, or indulge them; and ſometimes this muſt neceſſarily be done, before you can make a perſon part with ſome beloved error, and lead him into better ſentiments.

Suppoſe you would convince a *gameſter* that "gaming is not a lawful calling, or buſineſs of life, to maintain one's ſelf by it," and you make uſe of this argument, namely, "That which doth not admit us to aſk the bleſſing of God that we may get gain by it, cannot be a lawful employment; but we cannot aſk the bleſſing of God on gaming, therefore, *&c.*" The *minor* is proved thus: "We cannot pray that our neighbour may loſe; this is contrary to the rule of ſeeking our neighbour's welfare, and loving him as ourſelves; this is wiſhing miſchief to our neighbour. But in gaming, we can gain but juſt ſo much as our neighbour loſes: therefore in gaming, we cannot pray for the bleſſing of God that we may gain by it."

Perhaps the *gameſter* ſhrugs and winces, turns and twiſts the argument every way, but he cannot fairly anſwer it; yet he will patch up an anſwer to ſatisfy himſelf, and will never yield to the conviction, becauſe he feels ſo much of the ſweet influence of *gaming*, either towards the gratification of his avarice, or the ſupport of his expences. Thus he is under a ſtrong prejudice in favour of it, and is not eaſily convinced.

Your firſt work therefore, muſt be to lead him by degrees to ſeparate the thoughts of his *own intereſt* from the argument, and ſhew him that our own temporal intereſts, our livelihood, or our loſs, hath nothing to do to determine this point in oppoſition to the *plain reaſon* of things, and that he ought to put theſe conſiderations quite out of the queſtion, if he would be honeſt and ſincere in his ſearch after truth or duty: and that he

muſt be contented to hearken to the voice of reaſon and truth, even though it ſhould run counter to his ſecular intereſt. When this is done, then an argument may carry ſome weight or force with it toward his conviction.

In like manner, if the queſtion were whether *Matriſſa* ought to expoſe herſelf and her other children to poverty and miſery, in order to ſupport the extravagances of a favourite ſon? Perhaps the mother can hear no argument againſt it; ſhe feels no conviction in the moſt cogent reaſonings, ſo cloſe do her fond prejudices ſtick to her heart. The firſt buſineſs here is to remove this prejudice. Aſk her therefore, whether it is not a parent's duty to love all her children, ſo as to provide for their welfare? Whether duty to God and her family ought not to regulate her love to a favourite? Whether her neighbour *Floris* did well in dreſſing up her daughters with expenſive gaudery, and neglecting the education of her ſon till ſhe ſaw his ruin? Perhaps by this method ſhe might be brought to ſee, that *particular fondneſs* for one child, ſhould have no weight or force in determining the judgment in oppoſition to plain duty: and ſhe may then give herſelf up to conviction in her own caſe, and to the evidence of truth, and thus correct her miſtaken practice.

Suppoſe you would convert *Rominda* from Popery, and you ſet all the abſurdities, errors, and ſuperſtitions of that church before her in the moſt glaring evidence; ſhe holds them faſt ſtill, and cannot part with them, for ſhe hath a moſt ſacred reverence for the faith and the church of her anceſtors, and cannot imagine that they were in the wrong. The firſt labour muſt be therefore to convince her, that our anceſtors were fallible creatures; that we may part with their faith without any diſhonour done to them; that all perſons muſt chooſe their religion for themſelves; that we muſt anſwer for ourſelves in the great day of judgment, and not we for our parents, nor they for us; that *Chriſtianity* itſelf had never been received by her anceſtors in this nation, if they had perſiſted always in the religion of their pa-

rents, for they were all *Heathens*. And when ſhe has by theſe methods of reaſoning been perſuaded that ſhe is not bound always to cleave to the religion of her parents, ſhe may then receive an eaſier conviction of the errors of *Rome* *.

CHAP. VI.

Of INSTRUCTION *by* PREACHING.

SECT. I.

Wiſdom better than Learning in the Pulpit.

TYRO is a young preacher juſt come from the ſchools of logic and divinity, and advanced to the pulpit; he was counted a ſmart youngſter in the academy for analyſing a propoſition, and is full, even to the brim, with the terms of his art and learning. When he has read his text, after a ſhort flouriſh of introduction, he tells you, in how many ſenſes the chief word is taken, firſt among *Greek Heathen* writers, and then in the New Teſtament; he cites all the chapters and the verſes exactly, and endeavours to make you

* But perhaps of all theſe different methods of curing prejudices, none can be practiſed with greater pleaſure to a wiſe and good man, or with greater ſucceſs, where ſucceſs is moſt deſirable, than attempting to turn the attention of well-meaning people from ſome point in which prejudice prevails, to ſome other of greater importance, and fixing their thoughts and heart on ſome great truth which they allow, and which leads unto conſequences contrary to ſome other notion which they eſpouſe and retain. By this means they may be led to forget their errors, while attentive to oppoſite truth; and in proportion to the degree in which their minds open, and their tempers grow more generous and virtuous, may be induced to reſign it. And ſurely nothing can give a benevolent mind more ſatisfaction, than to improve his neighbour in knowledge, and in goodneſs at the ſame time.

underſtand many a text before he lets you know fully what he means by his own. He finds theſe things at large in the critics, which he has conſulted, where this ſort of work is neceſſary and beautiful, and therefore he imagines it will become his ſermon well. Then he informs you very learnedly, of the various falſe expoſitions which have been given by divines and commentators on this part of ſcripture, and it may be the reaſons of each of them too; and he refutes them with much zeal and contempt. Having thus cleared his way, he fixes upon the expoſition which his judgment beſt approves, and dwells, generally five or ten minutes upon the arguments to confirm it; and this he does not only in texts of darkneſs and difficulty, but even when ſcarcely a child could doubt of his meaning.

This *grammatical* exerciſe being performed, he applies himſelf to his *logic*; the text is divided and ſubdivided into many little pieces; he points you preciſely to the *ſubject* and the *predicate*, brings you acquainted with the *agent* and the *object*, ſhows you all the *properties* and the *accidents* that attend it, and would fain make you underſtand the *matter* and the *form* of it, as well as he does himſelf. When he has thus done, two thirds of the hour is ſpent, and his hearers are quite tired; then he begins to draw near to his doctrine, or grand theme of diſcourſe; and having told the audience, with great formality and exactneſs, what it is, and in what method he ſhall manage it, he names you one or two particulars under the firſt general head; and by this time finds it neceſſary to add, "He intended indeed to have been larger in the illuſtration of his ſubject, and he ſhould have given you ſome reaſons for the doctrine, but he is ſorry that he is prevented; and then he deſigned alſo, to have brought it down to the conſcience of every man by a warm addreſs; but his time being gone, he muſt break off." He hurries over a hint or two, which ſhould have been wrought up into exhortation or inſtruction, but all in great haſte, and thus concludes his work. The *obſtinate* and the *careleſs* ſinners go

away unawakened, unconvinced; and the *mourning* ſoul departs uncomforted: the *unbeliever* is not led to faith in the *goſpel*, nor the *immoral* wretch to hate or forſake his iniquities: the *hypocrite* and the *man of ſincerity* are both unedified, becauſe the preacher had not time. In ſhort, he has finiſhed his work, and he has done nothing.

When I hear this man preach, it brings to my remembrance the account which I have heard concerning the *Czar of Muſcovy*, the firſt time that his army beſieged a town in *Livonia:* he was then juſt come from his travels in *Great Britain*, where he and his miniſters of ſtate had learned the *mathematics* of an old acquaintance of mine: the *Czar* took great care to begin the ſiege in form; he drew all his lines of circumvallation and contravallation according to the rules of art; but he was ſo tedious and ſo exact in theſe mathematical performances, that the ſeaſon was ſpent, he was forced to break up the ſiege, and retire without any execution done upon the town.

Ergates is another ſort of preacher, a *workman that need not be aſhamed:* he had in his younger days but few of theſe learned vanities, and age and experience have now worn them all off: he preaches like a man *who watches for our ſouls, as one that muſt give an account;* he paſſes over leſſer matters with ſpeed, and purſues his great deſign, namely, *to ſave himſelf and them that hear him*, 1 *Tim.* iv. 16. And by following this advice of St *Paul*, he happily complies with that great and natural rule of *Horace*, always to make haſte towards the moſt valuable end:

Semper ad eventum feſtinat.——

He never affects to chooſe a very obſcure text, leſt he ſhould waſte too much of the hour in explaining the literal ſenſe of it: he reſerves all thoſe obſcurities, till they come in courſe at his ſeaſons of public expoſition; for it is his opinion, that preaching the goſpel for the ſalvation of men, carries in it a little different

idea from a learned and critical expoſition of the difficult texts of ſcripture.

He knows well how to uſe his *logic* in his compoſures; but he calls no part of the words by their *logical* name, if there be any *vulgar* name that anſwers it: reading and meditation have furniſhed him with extenſive views of his ſubject, and his own good ſenſe hath taught him to give ſufficient reaſons for every thing he aſſerts; but he never uſes one of them till a proof is needful. He is acquainted with the miſtaken gloſſes of expoſitors; but he thinks it needleſs to acquaint his hearers with them, unleſs there be evident danger that they might run into the ſame miſtake. He underſtands well what his ſubject is not, as well as what it is; but when he would explain it to you, he never ſays, *firſt, negatively*, unleſs ſome remarkable error is at hand, and which his hearers may eaſily fall into for want of ſuch a caution.

Thus in five or ten minutes at the moſt, he makes his way plain to the propoſition or theme on which he deſigns to diſcourſe; and being ſo wiſe as to know well what to ſay, and what to leave out, he proportions every part of his work to his time; he enlarges a little upon the ſubject, by way of illuſtration, till the truth becomes evident and intelligible to the weakeſt of his hearers; then he confirms the point with a few convincing arguments, where the matter requires it, and makes haſte to turn the doctrine into uſe and improvement. Thus the *ignorant* are inſtructed, and the *growing Chriſtians* are eſtabliſhed and improved: the *ſtupid ſinner* is loudly awakened, and the *mourning* ſoul receives conſolation: the *unbeliever* is led to truſt in *Chriſt* and his goſpel, and the *impenitent* and *immoral* are convinced and ſoftened, are melted and reformed. The inward voice of the Holy Spirit joins with the voice of the miniſter; the *good man* and the *hypocrite* have their proper portions aſſigned them, and the work of the Lord proſpers in his hand.

This is the uſual courſe and manner of his miniſtry. This method being natural, plain, and eaſy, he caſts

many of his diſcourſes into this form; but he is no ſlave to forms and methods of any kind: he makes the nature of his ſubject, and the neceſſity of his hearers, the great rule to direct him what method he ſhall chooſe in every ſermon, that he may the better enlighten, convince, and perſuade. *Ergates* well knows that where the ſubject itſelf is entirely practical, he has no need of the formality of long *uſes* and *exhortations*: he knows that practice is the chief deſign of doctrine; therefore he beſtows moſt of his labour upon this part of his office, and intermingles much of the pathetic under every particular: yet he wiſely obſerves the ſpecial dangers of his flock, and the errors of the time he lives in; and now and then (though very ſeldom) he thinks it neceſſary to ſpend almoſt a whole diſcourſe in mere doctrinal articles. Upon ſuch an occaſion, he thinks it proper to take up a little larger part of his hour in explaining and confirming the ſenſe of his text, and brings it down to the underſtanding of a child.

At another time, perhaps, he particularly deſigns to entertain the few learned and polite among his auditors; and that with this view, that he may ingratiate his diſcourſes with their ears, and may ſo far gratify their curioſity in this part of his ſermon, as to give an eaſier entrance for the more plain, neceſſary, and important parts of it into their hearts. Then he aims at, and he reaches the ſublime, and furniſhes out an entertainment for the fineſt taſte; but he ſcarcely ever finiſhes his ſermon without compaſſion to the unlearned, and an addreſs that may reach their conſciences with words of ſalvation.

I have obſerved him ſometimes after a learned diſcourſe, come down from the pulpit as a man aſhamed and quite out of countenance: he has bluſhed and complained to his intimate friends, leſt he ſhould be thought to have preached himſelf, and not *Chriſt Jeſus* his Lord: he has been ready to wiſh he had entertained the audience in a more unlearned manner, and on a more vulgar ſubject, leſt the ſervants, and the la-

bourers, and tradeſmen there, ſhould reap no advantage to their ſouls, and the important hour of worſhip ſhould be loſt, as to their improvement. Well he knows, and keeps it upon his heart, that the middle and lower ranks of mankind, and people of an unlettered character, make up the greater part of the aſſembly; therefore he is ever ſeeking how to adapt his thoughts and his language, and far the greateſt part of all his miniſtrations, to the inſtruction and profit of perſons of common rank and capacity: it is in the midſt of theſe that he hopes to find his triumph, his joy and crown in the laſt great day, for *not many wiſe, not many noble are called.*

There is ſo much ſpirit and beauty in his common converſation, that it is ſought and deſired by the ingenious men of his age: but he carries a ſevere guard of piety always about him, that tempers the pleaſant air of his diſcourſe, even in his brighteſt and freeſt hours; and before he leaves the place (if poſſible) he will leave ſomething of the ſavour of heaven there: in the parlour he carries on the deſign of the pulpit, but in ſo elegant a manner that it charms the company, and gives not the leaſt occaſion for cenſure.

His polite acquaintance will ſometimes rally him for talking ſo plainly in his ſermons, and ſinking his good ſenſe to ſo low a level: but *Ergates* is bold to tell the gayeſt of them, "Our public buſineſs, my friend, is "chiefly with the weak and the ignorant; that is, the "bulk of mankind: *the poor receive the goſpel:* the "mechanics and day-labourers, the women and chil-"dren of my aſſembly, have ſouls to be ſaved; I will "imitate my bleſſed Redeemer, in *preaching the goſpel* "*to the poor;* and learn of St *Paul* to *become all things* "*to all men, that I may win ſouls,* and lead many ſin-"ners to heaven by repentance, faith, and holineſs."

SECT. II.

A Branching Sermon.

I HAVE always thought it a miſtake in the preacher, to mince his text or his ſubject too ſmall, by a great number of ſubdiviſions; for it occaſions great confuſion of the underſtandings of the unlearned. Where a man divides his matter into more general, leſs general, ſpecial, and more particular heads, he is under a neceſſity ſometimes of ſaying, *firſtly* or *ſecondly*, two or three times together, which the learned may obſerve; but the greater part of the auditory, not knowing the *analyſis*, cannot ſo much as take it into their minds, and much leſs treaſure up in their memories in a juſt and regular order; and when ſuch hearers are deſired to give ſome account of the ſermon, they throw the *thirdly's* and *ſecondly's* into heaps, and make very confuſed work in a rehearſal, by intermingling the general and the ſpecial heads. In writing a large diſcourſe this is much more tolerable *; but in preaching it is leſs profitable and more intricate and offenſive.

It is as vain an affectation alſo to draw out a long rank of particulars in the ſame ſermon under any one general, and run up the number of them to *eighteenthly*, or *ſeven-and-twentiethly*. Men that take delight in this ſort of work, will cut out all their ſenſe into ſhreds; and every thing that they can ſay upon any topic, ſhall make a new particular.

This ſort of folly and miſtaken conduct appears weekly in *Polyramus's* lectures, and renders all his diſcourſes lean and inſipid. Whether it proceed from a mere barrenneſs of thought, and a native dryneſs of

* Eſpecially as words may be uſed to number the generals, and figures of different kinds and forms, to marſhall the primary and ſecondary ranks of particulars under them.

ſoul, that he is not able to vary his matter, and to amplify beyond the formal topics of an *analyſis*, or whether it ariſe from affectation of ſuch a way of talking, is hard to ſay; but it is certain, that the chief part of his auditory are not over-much profited or pleaſed. When I ſit under his preaching, I fancy myſelf brought into the valley of *Ezekiel*'s viſion; it *was full of bones, and behold, there were very many in the valley, and lo, they were very dry*, *Ezek.* xxxvii. 1, 2.

It is the variety of enlargement upon a few proper heads, that clothes the dry bones and fleſh, and animates them with blood and ſpirits; it is this that colours the diſcourſe, makes it warm and ſtrong, and renders the divine propoſitions bright and perſuaſive: it is this brings down the doctrine or the duty to the underſtanding and conſcience of the whole auditory, and commands the natural affections into the intereſt of the goſpel. In ſhort, it is this that, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, gives life and force, beauty and ſucceſs to a ſermon, and provides food for ſouls. A ſingle roſe-buſh, or a dwarf-pear, with all their leaves, flowers, and fruit about them, have more beauty and ſpirit in themſelves, and yield more food and pleaſure to mankind, than the innumerable branches, boughs, and twigs of a long hedge of thorns. The fruit will feed the hungry, and the flower will refreſh the fainting; which is more than can be ſaid of the thickeſt oak in *Baſhan*, when it has loſt its vital juice; it may ſpread its limbs indeed far and wide, but they are naked, withered, and ſapleſs.

SECT. III.

The HARANGUE.

IS it not poſſible to forſake one extreme without running into a worſe? Is there no *medium* between a ſermon made up of ſixty dry particulars, and a long looſe declamation, without any diſtinction of the parts

of it? Muſt the preacher divide his works by the breaks of a minute-watch, or let it run on inceſſantly to the laſt word, like the flowing ſtream of the hour-glaſs that meaſures his divinity? Surely *Fluvio* preaches as though he knew no medium; and having taken a diſguſt heretofore at one of *Polyramus's* lectures, he reſolved his own diſcourſes ſhould have no diſtinction of particulars in them. His language flows ſmoothly in a long connection of periods, and glides over the ear like a rivulet of oil over poliſhed marble, and like that too leaves no trace behind it. The attention is detained in a gentle pleaſure, and (to ſay the beſt thing poſſible of it) the hearer is ſoothed in ſomething like divine delight; but he can give the inquiring friend ſcarcely any account what it was that pleaſed him. He retains a faint idea of the ſweetneſs, but has forgotten the ſenſe.

Tell me *Fluvio*, is this the moſt effectual way to inſtruct ignorant creatures in the ſeveral articles of faith, and the various duties of the Chriſtian life? Will ſuch a long uniform flow of language imprint all the diſtant parts of Chriſtian knowledge on the mind, in their beſt form and order? Do you find ſuch a gentle and gliding ſtream of words, moſt powerful to call up the ſouls of ſinners from their dangerous or fatal lethargy? Will this indolent and moveleſs ſpecies of oratory make a thoughtleſs wretch attend to matters of infinite moment? Can a long purling ſound awaken a ſleepy conſcience, and give a periſhing ſinner juſt notices of his dreadful hazard? Can it furniſh his underſtanding and his memory with all the awful and tremendous topics of our religion, when it ſcarcely ever leaves any diſtinct impreſſion of one of them on his ſoul? Can you make the arrow wound where it will not ſtick? Where all the diſcourſe vaniſhes from the remembrance, can you ſuppoſe the ſoul to be profited or enriched? When you bruſh over the cloſed eye-lids with a feather, did you ever find it give light to the blind? Has any of your ſoft harangues, your continued threads of ſilken eloquence, ever raiſed the dead? I fear your whole

aim is to talk over the appointed number of minutes upon the ſubject, or to practiſe a little upon the gentler paſſions, without any concern how to give the underſtanding its due improvement, or to furniſh the memory with any laſting treaſure, or to make a knowing and a religious Chriſtian.

Aſk old *Wheatfield* the rich farmer, aſk *Plowdown* your neighbour, or any of his family who have ſat all their lives under your miniſtry, what they know of the common truths of religion, or of the ſpecial articles of Chriſtianity. Deſire them to tell you, what the goſpel is, or what is ſalvation? What are their duties toward God, or what they mean by religion? Who is *Jeſus Chriſt*, or what is the meaning of his atonement or redemption by his blood? Perhaps you will tell me yourſelf, that you have very ſeldom entertained them with theſe ſubjects. Well, inquire of them what is heaven? Which is the way to obtain it, or what hope they have of dwelling there? Entreat them to tell you, wherein they have profited as to holineſs of heart or life, or fitneſs for death. They will ſoon make it appear by their awkward anſwers, that they underſtood very little of all your fine diſcourſes, and thoſe of your predeceſſors; and have made but wretched improvement of forty years attendance at church. They have now and then been pleaſed, perhaps, with the muſic of your voice, as with the ſound of a ſweet inſtrument, and they miſtook that for devotion: but their heads are dark ſtill, and their hearts earthly; they are mere *Heathens* with a *Chriſtian* name, and know little more of God than their yokes of oxen. In ſhort, *Polyramus*'s auditors have ſome confuſion in their knowledge, but *Fluvio*'s hearers have ſcarcely any knowledge at all.

But you will tell me, your diſcourſes are not all made up of harangue: your deſign is ſometimes to inform the mind by a train of well-connected reaſonings, and that all your paragraphs in their long order prove and ſupport each other; and though you do not diſtinguiſh your diſcourſe into particulars, yet you have

kept ſome inviſible method all the way, and by ſome artificial gradations, you have brought your ſermon down to the concluding ſentence.

It may be ſo ſometimes, and I will acknowledge it: but believe me *Fluvio*, this artificial and inviſible method carries darkneſs with it inſtead of light; nor is it by any means a proper way to inſtruct the vulgar, that is, the bulk of your *auditory:* their ſouls are not capable of ſo wide a ſtretch, as to take in the whole chain of your long-connected conſequences: you talk reaſon and religion to them in vain, if you do not make the argument ſo ſhort as to come within their graſp, and give a frequent reſt for their thoughts: you muſt break the bread of life into pieces to feed children with it, and part your diſcourſes into diſtinct propoſitions, to give the ignorant a plain ſcheme of any one doctrine, and enable them to comprehend or retain it.

Every day gives us experiments to confirm what I ſay, and to encourage miniſters to divide their ſermons into ſeveral diſtinct heads of diſcourſe. *Myrtilla*, a little creature of nine years old, was at church twice yeſterday: in the morning the preacher entertained his audience with a running oration, and the child could give her parents no other account of it, but that he talked ſmoothly and ſweetly about virtue and heaven. It was *Ergates*'s lot to fulfil the ſervice of the afternoon; he is an excellent preacher, both for the wiſe and unwiſe: in the evening, *Myrtilla* very prettily entertained her mother with a repetition of the moſt conſiderable parts of the ſermon; for "Here," ſaid ſhe, "I can fix my thoughts upon *firſt*, *ſecondly*, and "*thirdly*, upon the *doctrine*, the *reaſons*, and the *infer-*"*ences;* and I know what I muſt try to remember, "and repeat it when my friends ſhall aſk me: but as "for the morning ſermon I could do nothing but hear "it, for I could not tell what I ſhould get by heart."

This manner of talking in a looſe-harangue, has not only injured our pulpits, but it makes the ſeveral *eſ-ſays* and *treatiſes*, that are written now a-days, leſs ca-

pable of improving the knowledge, or enriching the memory of the reader.

I will eaſily grant, that where the whole diſcourſe reaches not beyond a few pages, there is no neceſſity of the formal propoſal of the ſeveral parts, before you handle each of them diſtinctly, nor is there need of ſuch a ſet method: the unlearned and narrow underſtanding can take an eaſy view of the whole, without the author's pointing to the ſeveral parts. But where the eſſay is prolonged to a greater extent, confuſion grows upon the reader almoſt at every page, without ſome ſcheme or method of ſucceſſive heads in the diſcourſe, to direct the mind and aid the memory.

If it be anſwered here, That neither ſuch treatiſes nor ſermons are a mere heap, for there is a juſt method obſerved in the compoſure, and the ſubjects are ranked in a proper order. It is eaſy to reply, That this method is ſo concealed, that a common reader or hearer can never find it; and you muſt ſuppoſe every one that peruſes ſuch a book, and much more that attends ſuch a diſcourſe, to have ſome good knowledge of the art of *Logic* before he can diſtinguiſh the various parts and branches, the connexions and tranſitions of it. To an unlearned eye or ear, it appears a mere heap of good things, without any method, form, or order; and if you tell your young friends they ſhould get it into their heads and hearts, they know not how to ſet about it.

If we inquire, how it comes to paſs that our modern ingenious writers ſhould affect this manner? I know no juſter reaſon to give for it, than a humorous and wanton contempt of the cuſtoms and practices of our forefathers; a ſenſible diſguſt taken at ſome of their miſtakes and ill conduct, at firſt tempted a vain generation into the contrary extreme near ſixty years ago; and now even to this day it continues too much in faſhion, ſo that the wiſe as well as the weak are aſhamed to oppoſe it, and are borne down with the current.

Our fathers formed their ſermons much upon the model of *doctrine*, *reaſon*, and *uſe*; and perhaps there is no one method of more univerſal ſervice, and more eaſily applicable to moſt ſubjects, though it is not neceſſary or proper in every diſcourſe: but the very names of *doctrine* and *uſe* are become now-a-days ſuch ſtale and old-faſhioned things, that a modiſh preacher is quite aſhamed of them; nor can a modiſh hearer bear the ſound of thoſe ſyllables: a direct and diſtinct addreſs to the conſciences of *ſaints* and *ſinners*, muſt not be named or mentioned, though theſe terms are ſcriptural; leſt it ſhould be hiſſed out of the church, like the garb of a round-head or a puritan.

Some of our fathers have multiplied their particulars under one ſingle head of diſcourſe, and run up the tale of them to *ſixteen* or *ſeventeen*. Culpable indeed, and too numerous! But, in oppoſition to this extreme, we are almoſt aſhamed in our age to ſay *thirdly*; and all *fourthly's* and *fifthly's* are very unfaſhionable words.

Our fathers made too great account of the ſciences of *logic* and *metaphyſics*, and the formalities of *definition* and *diviſion*, *ſyllogiſm* and *method*, when they brought them ſo often into the pulpit; but we hold thoſe arts ſo much in contempt and defiance, that we had rather talk a whole hour without order and without edification, than be ſuſpected of uſing *logic* or method in our diſcourſes.

Some of our fathers neglected *politeneſs* perhaps too much, and indulged a coarſeneſs of ſtyle, and a rough or awkward pronunciation; but we have ſuch a value for elegancy, and ſo nice a taſte for what we call *polite*, that we dare not ſpoil the cadence of a period to quote a text of ſcripture in it, nor diſturb the harmony of our ſentences, to number or to name the heads of our diſcourſe. And for this reaſon, I have heard it hinted, that the name of CHRIST has been baniſhed out of polite ſermons, becauſe it is a monoſyllable of ſo many conſonants, and ſo harſh a ſound.

But, after all, our fathers, with all their defects, and with all their weakneſſes, preached the goſpel of

Chriſt to the ſenſible inſtruction of whole pariſhes, to the converſion of ſinners from the errors of their way, and the ſalvation of multitudes of ſouls. But it has been the late complaint of Dr. *Edwards*, and other worthy ſons of the eſtabliſhed church, that in too many pulpits now-a-days, there are only heard ſome ſmooth declamations, while the hearers that were ignorant of the goſpel abide ſtill without knowledge, and the profane ſinners are profane ſtill. O that divine grace would deſcend and reform what is amiſs in all the ſanctuaries of the nation *!

CHAP. VII.

Of writing Books for the Public.

IN the *explication* and *diſtinction* of words and things by definition and deſcription, in the *diviſion* of things into their ſeveral parts, and in the *diſtribution* of things into their ſeveral kinds, be ſure to obſerve a juſt medium. We muſt not always explain and diſtinguiſh, define, divide, and diſtribute, nor muſt we always omit it: ſometimes it is uſeleſs and impertinent, ſometimes it is proper and neceſſary. There is confuſion brought into our argument and diſcourſe by too many, or by too few of theſe. One author plunges his reader into the midſt of *things* without due explication of them; another jumbles together without diſtinction, all thoſe ideas which have any likeneſs; a third is fond of explaining every word, and coining diſtinctions between ideas which have little or no difference: but each of

* It appears by the date, at the bottom of this paper in the MSS. that it was written in the year 1718. The firſt, and perhaps the ſecond ſection of it, may ſeem now to be grown in a great meaſure out of date; but whether the third is not at leaſt as ſeaſonable now as ever, may deſerve ſerious conſideration. The author ſince this was drawn up, hath delivered his ſentiments more fully in the firſt part of that excellent piece entitled, *An humble Attempt for the Revival of Religion*, &c.

theſe runs into extremes; for all theſe practices are equal hindrances to clear, juſt, and uſeful knowledge. It is not a long train of rules, but obſervation and good judgment, can teach us when to explain, define, and divide, and where to omit it.

In the beginning of a treatiſe, it is proper and neceſſary ſometimes to premiſe *ſome præcognita* or *general principles*, which may ſerve for an introduction to the ſubject in hand, and give light or ſtrength to the following diſcourſe: but it is ridiculous, under a pretence of ſuch *introductions* or *prefaces*, to wander to the moſt remote or diſtant themes, which have no near or neceſſary connexion with the thing in hand; this ſerves for no other purpoſe but to make a gaudy ſhew of learning. There was a profeſſor of divinity, who began an *analytical expoſition of the Epiſtle to the Romans* with ſuch *præcognita* as theſe: firſt he ſhewed the *excellence of man* above other creatures, who was able to declare the ſenſe of his mind by arbitrary ſigns; then he harangued upon the *origin of ſpeech*; after that he told of the wonderful *invention of writing*, and inquired into the author of that art which taught us to paint ſounds: when he had given us the various opinions of the learned on this point, and diſtributed *writing* into its *ſeveral kinds*, and laid down definitions of them all, at laſt he came to ſpeak of *epiſtolary writing*, and diſtinguiſhed *epiſtles* into *familiar*, *private*, *public*, *recommendatory credentials*, and what not? Thence he deſcended to ſpeak of the *ſuperſcription*, *ſubſcription*, &c. And ſome lectures were finiſhed before he came to the firſt verſe of St. *Paul*'s epiſtle; the auditors, being half ſtarved and tired with expectation, dropped away one by one, ſo that the profeſſor had ſcarce any hearers to attend the college or the lectures which he had promiſed on that part of ſcripture.

The rules which *Horace* has given in his *Art of Poetry*, would inſtruct many a *preacher* and *profeſſor of theology*, if they would but attend to them. He informs us, that a wiſe author, ſuch as *Homer*, who writes a poem of the *Trojan war*, would not begin a long and

far-diſtant ſtory of *Jupiter*, in the form of a ſwan impregnating *Leda* with a double egg; from one part whereof *Helen* was hatched, who was married to *Menelaus* a *Greek* general, and then ſtolen from him by *Paris*, ſon of *Priam* king of *Troy*, which awakened the reſentment of the *Greeks* againſt the *Trojans*.

Nec gemino bellum Trojanum orditur ab ovo.

But the writer, ſays he, makes all proper haſte to the event of things, and does not drag on ſlowly, perpetually turning aſide from his point, and catching at every incident to prolong his ſtory, as though he wanted matter to furniſh out his tale.

Semper ad eventum feſtinat.

Though, I muſt confeſs, I cannot think *Homer* has always followed this rule in either of his two famous epic poems: but *Horace* does not hear what I ſay. There is alſo another rule near a-kin to the former.

As a writer or a ſpeaker ſhould not wander from his ſubject to fetch in foreign matter from afar, ſo neither ſhould he amaſs together and drag in all that can be ſaid, even on his appointed theme of diſcourſe; but he ſhould conſider what is his chief deſign, what is the end he hath in view, and then to make every part of his diſcourſe ſubſerve that deſign. If he keep his great end always in his eye, he will paſs haſtily over thoſe parts or appendages of his ſubject which have no evident connexion with his deſign, or he will entirely omit them, and haſten continually towards his intended mark; employing his time, his ſtudy and labour, chiefly on that part of his ſubject which is moſt neceſſary to attain his preſent and proper end.

This might be illuſtrated by a multitude of examples; but an author who ſhould heap them together on ſuch an occaſion, might be in danger of be-

coming himſelf an example of the impertinence he is cautioning others to avoid.

After you have finiſhed any diſcourſe which you deſign for the public, it would be always beſt, if other circumſtances would permit, to *let it ſleep ſome time before you expoſe it to the world*, that ſo you may have opportunity to review it with the indifference of a ſtranger, and to make the whole of it paſs under a new and juſt examination: for no man can judge ſo juſtly of his own work, while the pleaſure of his invention and performance is freſh, and has engaged his ſelf-love too much on the ſide of what he has newly finiſhed.

If an author would ſend a diſcourſe into the world, which ſhould be moſt univerſally approved, he ſhould *conſult perſons of very different genius, ſentiment, and party*, and endeavour to learn their opinions of it. In the world it will certainly meet with all theſe. Set it therefore to view amongſt ſeveral of your acquaintance firſt, who may ſurvey the argument on all ſides, and one may happen to ſuggeſt a correction which is entirely neglected by others; and be ſure to *yield yourſelf to the dictates of true criticiſm, and juſt cenſure, wherefoever you meet with them*; nor let a fondneſs for what you have written, blind your eyes againſt the diſcovery of your own miſtakes.

When an author deſires a friend to reviſe his work, it is too frequent a practice to diſallow almoſt every correction which a judicious friend would make; he apologizes for this word, and the other expreſſion; he vindicates this ſentence, and gives his reaſons for another paragraph, and ſcarcely ever ſubmits to correction; and this utterly diſcourages the freedom that a true friend would take, in pointing out our miſtakes. Such writers who are ſo full of themſelves, may go on to admire their own incorrect performances, and expoſe their works and their follies to the world without pity*.

* To cut off ſuch chicanery, it may perhaps be the moſt expedient for a perſon conſulted, on ſuch an occaſion, to note down on a diſtinct paper, with proper references, the adviſed

Horace, in his Art of Poetry, talks admirably well on this ſubject:

Quintilio ſi quid recitares, corrige, ſodes,
Hoc, aiebat, et hoc; melius te poſſe negares
Bis terque expertum fruſtra; delere jubebat,
Et male tornatos incudi reddere verſus.
Si defendere delictum, quam vertere, malles;
Nulla ultra verbum, aut operam inſumebat inanem,
Quin ſine rivali teque et tua ſolus amares.

Let good *Quintilius* all your lines reviſe,
And he will freely ſay, mend this and this;
Sir, I have often try'd, and try'd again,
I'm ſure I can't do better, 'tis in vain;
Then blot out every word, or try once more,
And file theſe ill-turn'd verſes o'er and o'er:
But if you ſeem in love with your own thought,
More eager to defend, than mend, your fault,
He ſays no more, but lets the fop go on,
And, rival free, admire his lovely own. CREECH.

If you have not the advantage of friends to ſurvey your writings, then read them over yourſelf, and all the way conſider what will be the ſentence and judgment of all the various characters of mankind upon them: think what one of your own party would ſay, or what would be the ſenſe of an adverſary: imagine what a curious or a malicious man, what a captious or an envious critic, what a vulgar or a learned reader would object, either to the matter, the manner, or the ſtyle: and be ſure and think with yourſelf, what you yourſelf could ſay againſt your own writing, if you were of a different opinion, or a ſtranger to the writer: and by theſe means you will obtain ſome hints, whereby to correct and improve your own work, and to guard it better againſt the cenſures of the public, as well as to render it more uſeful to that part of mankind for whom you chiefly deſign it.

alterations, referring it to the author, to make ſuch uſe of them as he, on due deliberation, ſhall think fit.

CHAP. VIII.

Of WRITING *and* READING CONTROVERSIES.

SECT. I.

Of Writing Controverſies.

WHEN a perſon of good ſenſe writes on any controverted ſubject, he will generally bring the ſtrongeſt arguments that are uſually to be found for the ſupport of his opinion; and when that is done, he will repreſent the moſt powerful objections againſt it in a fair and candid manner, giving them their full force; and at laſt will put in ſuch an anſwer to thoſe objections, as he thinks will diſſipate and diſſolve the force of them: and herein the reader will generally find a full view of the controverſy, together with the main ſtrength of argument on both ſides.

When *a good writer* has ſet forth his own opinion at large, and vindicated it with its faireſt and ſtrongeſt proofs, he ſhall be attacked by ſome pen on the other ſide of the queſtion; and if his *opponent* be a wiſe and ſenſible writer, he will ſhew the beſt reaſons why the former opinions cannot be true; that is, he will draw out the objections againſt them in their fulleſt array, in order to deſtroy what he ſuppoſes a miſtaken opinion: and here we may reaſonably ſuppoſe, that an opponent will draw up his objections againſt the ſuppoſed error in a brighter light, and with ſtronger evidence, than the firſt writer did, who propounded his opinion which was contrary to thoſe objections.

If, in the third place, the firſt writer anſwers his opponent with care and diligence, and maintains his own point againſt the objections which were raiſed in the beſt manner; the reader may then generally preſume, that in theſe three pieces he has a complete

view of the controverſy; together with the moſt ſolid and powerful arguments on both ſides of the debate.

But when a *fourth*, and *fifth*, and *ſixth* volume appears in *rejoinders* and *replies*, we cannot reaſonably expect any great degrees of light to be derived from them; or that much farther evidences for truth ſhould be found in them: and it is ſufficiently evident from daily experience, that many miſchiefs attend this prolongation of controverſies among men of learning, which for the moſt part do injury to the truth, either by turning the attention of the reader quite away from the original point to other matters, or by covering the truth with a multitude of occaſional incidents and perplexities, which ſerve to bewilder rather than guide a faithful inquirer.

Sometimes, in theſe latter volumes, the writers on both ſides will hang upon *little words* and *occaſional expreſſions* of their opponent, in order to expoſe them, which have no neceſſary connexion with the grand point in view, and which have nothing to do with the debated truth.

Sometimes they will ſpend many a page in vindicating their own character, or their own little ſentences or accidental expreſſions, from the remarks of their opponent, in which expreſſions or remarks the original truth has no concern.

And ſometimes again you ſhall find even writers of good ſenſe, who have happened to expreſs themſelves in an improper and indefenſible manner, led away by the fondneſs of ſelf-love to juſtify thoſe expreſſions, and vindicate thoſe little lapſes they were guilty of, rather than they will condeſcend to correct thoſe little miſtakes, or recall thoſe improper expreſſions. O that we could put off our pride, our ſelf-ſufficiency, and our infallibility, when we enter into a debate of truth! But if the writer is guilty of mingling theſe things with his grand argument, happy will that reader be who has judgment enough to diſtinguiſh them, and to ne-

glect every thing that does not belong to the original theme propoſed and diſputed.

Yet here it may be proper to put in one exception to this general obſervation or remark, namely, when the *ſecond writer* attacks only a *particular* or *collateral opinion* which was maintained by the firſt, then the *fourth writing* may be ſuppoſed to contain a neceſſary part of the complete force of the argument, as well as the *ſecond* and *third*, becauſe the *firſt writing* only occaſionally or collaterally mentioned that ſentiment which the *ſecond* attacks and oppoſes; and, in ſuch a caſe, the *ſecond* may be eſteemed as the firſt treatiſe on that controverſy. It would take up too much time ſhould we mention inſtances of this kind, which might be pointed to in moſt of our controverſial writers, and it might be invidious to enter into the detail *.

SECT. II.

Of Reading Controverſies.

WHEN we take a book into our hands wherein any doctrine or opinion is printed in a way of argument, we are too often ſatisfied and determined

* Upon this it may be remarked farther, that there is a certain ſpirit of modeſty and benevolence which never fails to adorn a writer on ſuch occaſions, and which generally does him much more ſervice in the judgment of wiſe and ſenſible men, than any poignancy of ſatire with which he might be able to animate his productions; and as this always appears amiable, ſo is it peculiarly charming, when the opponent ſhews that pertneſs and petulancy which is ſo very common on ſuch occaſions. When a writer, inſtead of purſuing with eager reſentment the antagoniſt that has given ſuch provocation, calmly attends to the main queſtion in debate, with a noble negligence of thoſe little advantages which ill-nature and ill-manners always give, he acquires a glory far ſuperior to any trophies which wit can raiſe. And it is highly probable, that the ſolid inſtruction his pages may contain, will give a continuance to his writings far beyond what tracts of peeviſh controverſy are to expect, of which the much greater part are borne away into oblivion by the wind they raiſe, or burned in their own flames.

before-hand, whether it be *right* or *wrong*; and if we are on the writer's ſide, we are generally tempted to take his arguments for ſolid and ſubſtantial; and thus our own former ſentiment is eſtabliſhed more powerfully, without a ſincere ſearch after truth.

If we are on the other ſide of the queſtion, we then take it for granted that there is nothing of force in theſe arguments, and we are ſatisfied with a ſhort ſurvey of the book, and are ſoon perſuaded to pronounce miſtake, weakneſs, and inſufficiency concerning it. Multitudes of common readers, who are fallen into any error, when they are directed and adviſed to read a treatiſe that would ſet them right, read it with a ſort of diſguſt which they have before entertained; they ſkim lightly over the arguments, they neglect or deſpiſe the force of them, and keep their own concluſion firm in their aſſent, and thus they maintain their error in the midſt of light, and grow incapable of conviction.

But if we would indeed act like *ſincere ſearchers for the truth*, we ſhould ſurvey every argument with a careful and unbiaſſed mind, whether it agree with our former opinion or no: we ſhould give every reaſoning its full force, and weigh it in our ſedateſt judgment. Now the beſt way to try what force there is in the arguments which are brought againſt our own opinions is, to ſit down and endeavour to give a ſolid anſwer, one by one, to every argument that the author brings to ſupport his own doctrine: and in this attempt, if we find there ſome arguments which we are not able to anſwer fairly to our own minds, we ſhould then begin to bethink ourſelves, whether we have not been hitherto in a miſtake, and whether the defender of the contrary ſentiments may not be in the right. Such a method as this will effectually forbid us to pronounce at once againſt thoſe doctrines, and thoſe writers, which are contrary to our ſentiments; and we ſhall endeavour to find ſolid arguments to refute their poſitions, before we entirely eſtabliſh ourſelves in a contrary opinion.

Volatilis had given himſelf up to the converſation of the *free-thinkers* of our age, upon all ſubjects; and being pleaſed with the wit and appearance of argument, in ſome of our modern *Deiſts*, had too eaſily deſerted the Chriſtian faith, and gone over to the camp of the infidels. Among other books which were recommended to him, to reduce him to the faith of the goſpel, he had Mr. *John Reynolds*'s *three Letters to a Deiſt* put into his hand, and was particularly deſired to peruſe the third of them with the utmoſt care, as being an unanſwerable defence of the truth of Chriſtianity. He took it in hand, and after having given it a ſhort ſurvey, he told his friend he ſaw nothing in it, but the common arguments which we all uſe to ſupport the religion in which we had been educated, but they wrought no conviction in him; nor did he ſee ſufficient reaſon to believe, that the goſpel of Chriſt was not a piece of *enthuſiaſm*, or a mere *impoſture*.

Upon this the friend who recommended Mr. *Reynolds*'s *three Letters* to his ſtudy, being confident of the force of truth which lay there, entreated of *Volatilis* that he would ſet himſelf down with diligence, and try to anſwer Mr. *Reynolds*'s *third Letter* in vindication of the goſpel; and that he would ſhow under every head, how the ſeveral ſteps which were taken in the propagation of the Chriſtian religion, might be the natural effects of impoſture or enthuſiaſm; and conſequently, that it deſerves no credit among men.

Volatilis undertook the work, and after he had entered a little way into it, found himſelf ſo bewildered, and his arguments to prove the apoſtles either enthuſiaſts or impoſtors ſo muddled, ſo perplexed, and ſo inconcluſive, that by a diligent review of this letter to the Deiſt, at laſt he acknowledged himſelf fully convinced that the religion of Jeſus was divine; for that Chriſtian author had made it appear, it was impoſſible that doctrine ſhould have been propagated in the world by ſimplicity or folly, by fraud or falſehood; and accordingly, reſigned his ſoul up to the goſpel of the bleſſed Jeſus.

I fear there have been multitudes of ſuch unbelievers as *Volatilis*; and he himſelf has confeſſed to me, that even his moſt rational friends would be conſtrained to yield to the evidence of the Chriſtian doctrine, if they would honeſtly try the ſame method.

A

DISCOURSE

ON THE

Education of Children and Youth.

A

DISCOURSE, &c.

INTRODUCTION.

Of the Importance of Education, and the Design of this Discourse, with a Plan of it.

THE children of the preſent age, are the hope of the age to come. We who are now acting our ſeveral parts in the buſy ſcenes of life, are haſting off the ſtage apace: months and days are ſweeping us away from the buſineſs and the ſurface of this earth, and continually laying ſome of us to ſleep under ground. The circle of thirty years will plant another generation in our room: another ſet of mortals will be the chief actors in all the greater and leſſer affairs of this life, and will fill the world with bleſſings or with miſchiefs, when our heads lie low in the duſt.

Shall we not then conſider with ourſelves, what can we do now to prevent thoſe miſchiefs, and to entail bleſſings on our ſucceſſors? What ſhall we do to ſecure wiſdom, goodneſs, and religion, among the next generation of men? Have we any concern for the glory of God in the riſing age? any ſolicitude for the propagation of virtue and happineſs to thoſe who ſhall ſtand up in our ſtead? Let us then hearken to the voice of GOD and *Solomon*, and we ſhall learn how this may be done: the all-wiſe God, and the wiſeſt of men, join to give us this advice; *Train up a child in the way that he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.* The ſenſe of it may be expreſſed more at

large in this propoſition, namely, *Let children have a good education given them in the younger parts of life, and this is the moſt likely way to eſtabliſh them in virtue and piety in their elder years.*

In this diſcourſe, I ſhall not enter into any inquiries about the management of children in the two or three firſt years of their life: I leave that tender age entirely to the care of the mother and the nurſe; yet not without a wiſh, that ſome wiſer and happier pen would give advice or friendly notice to nurſes and mothers, of what they ought to avoid, and what they ought to do in thoſe early ſeaſons: and indeed, they may do much towards the future welfare of thoſe young buds and bloſſoms, thoſe leſſer pieces of human nature, which are their proper charge. Some of the ſeeds of virtue and goodneſs may be conveyed almoſt into their very conſtitution betimes, by the pious prudence of thoſe who have the conduct of them: and ſome forward vices may be nipped in the very bud, which in three years time might gain too firm a root in their heart and practice, and may not eaſily be plucked up by all the following care of their teachers.

But I begin with children when they can walk and talk, when they have learned their mother-tongue, when they begin to give ſome more evident diſcoveries of their intellectual powers, and are more manifeſtly capable of having their minds formed and moulded into knowledge, virtue, and piety.

Now the firſt and moſt univerſal ingredient which enters into the education of children, is an *inſtruction of them in thoſe things which are neceſſary and uſeful for them in their rank and ſtation, and that with regard to this world and the world to come.*

I limit theſe inſtructions (eſpecially ſuch as relate to this world) by the *ſtation* and *rank of life* in which children are born and placed by the providence of God. Perſons of better circumſtances in the world, ſhould give their ſons and their daughters a much larger ſhare of knowledge, and a richer variety of inſtruction, than meaner perſons can or ought. But

ſince every child that is born into this world hath a body and a ſoul, ſince its happineſs or miſery in this world and the next, depends very much upon its inſtructions and knowledge, it hath a right to be taught by its parents, according to their beſt ability, ſo much as is neceſſary for its well-being, both in ſoul and body, here and hereafter.

It is true, that the great God our Creator hath made us reaſonable creatures: we are by nature capable of learning a million of objects: but as the ſoul comes into the world, it is unfurniſhed with knowledge; we are born ignorant of every good and uſeful thing: we know not God, we know not ourſelves, we know not what is our duty and our intereſt, nor where lies our danger; and, if left entirely to ourſelves, ſhould probably grow up like the brutes of the earth; we ſhould trifle away the brighter ſeaſons of life in a thouſand crimes and follies, and endure the fatigues and burdens of it, ſurrounded with a thouſand miſeries; and at laſt we ſhould periſh and die without knowledge or hope, if we had no inſtructors.

All our other powers of nature, ſuch as the will and the various affections, the ſenſes, the appetites, and the limbs, would become wild inſtruments of madneſs and miſchief, if not governed by the underſtanding: and the underſtanding itſelf would run into a thouſand errors, dreadful and pernicious, and would employ all the other powers in miſchief and madneſs, if it hath not the happineſs to be inſtructed in the things of God and men. And who is there among all our fellow-creatures ſo much obliged to beſtow this inſtruction on us, as the perſons who, by divine providence, have been the inſtruments to bring us into life and being? It is their duty to give their young offſpring this benefit of inſtruction, as far as they are able; or at leaſt to provide ſuch inſtructors for them, and to put the children under their care.

Here let us therefore inquire, *what are the ſeveral things in which children ſhould be inſtructed?* And upon

a due ſurvey, we ſhall find the moſt important things which children ought to learn and know, are theſe which follow.

SECT. I.

Of inſtructing Children in Religion.

RELIGION, in all the parts of it, both what they are to believe, and what they are to practiſe, is moſt neceſſary to be taught. I mention this in the firſt place, not only becauſe it is a matter of the higheſt importance, and of moſt univerſal concern to all mankind, but becauſe it may be taught even in theſe very early years of life. As ſoon as children begin to know almoſt any thing, and to exerciſe their reaſon about matters that lie within the reach of their knowledge, they may be brought to know ſo much of religion as is neceſſary for their age and ſtate. For inſtance,

1. Young children may be taught that there is a God, a great and almighty God who made them, and who gives them every good thing. That he ſees them every where, though they cannot ſee him; and that he takes notice of all their behaviour.

2. They muſt be told what they ſhould do, and what they ſhould avoid, in order to pleaſe God. They ſhould be taught in general to know the difference between good and evil. They may learn, that it is their duty to fear, and love, and worſhip God, to pray to him for what they want, and to praiſe him for what they enjoy; to obey their parents, to ſpeak truth, and to be honeſt and friendly to all mankind; and to ſet a guard upon their own appetites and paſſions. And that to neglect theſe things, or to do any thing contrary to them, is ſinful in the ſight of God.

3. Their conſciences are capable of receiving conviction when they have neglected theſe duties, or broken the commands of God or of their parents; and they may be made ſenſible that the great and holy God, who loves the righteous, and beſtows bleſſings

upon them, is angry with those who have broken his commands and sinned against him; and therefore that they themselves are become subject to his displeasure.

4. They may be told, that there is another world after this; and that their souls do not die when their bodies die: that they shall be taken up into heaven, which is a state of pleasure and happiness, if they have been good and holy in this world; but if they have been wicked children, they must go down to hell, which is a state of misery and torment.

5. You may also inform them, that though their bodies die and are buried, yet God can and will raise them to life again; and that their body and soul together must be made happy or miserable, according to their behaviour in this life.

6. They may be taught, that there is no way for such sinful creatures as we are to be received into God's favour, but for the sake of *Jesus Christ* the Son of God; who came down from heaven into our world, and lived a life of pure and perfect holiness, and suffered death to reconcile sinners to the great and holy God, who is offended by the sins of men; and now he lives in heaven to plead for mercy for them: and that as this *Jesus Christ* is the only reconciler between God and man, so all their hope must be placed in him.

7. They may be taught, that their very natures are sinful: they may be convinced, that they are inclined naturally to do evil: and they should be informed, that it is the *holy Spirit of God* who must cure the evil temper of their own spirits, and make them holy and fit to dwell with God in heaven.

8. They should also be instructed to pray to God, that for the sake of *Jesus Christ*, the great Mediator or reconciler, he would pardon their sins past, and help them by his Spirit to love and serve him with zeal and faithfulness for the time to come: that he would bestow all necessary blessings upon them in this world, and bring them safe at last to his heavenly kingdom.

9. In the last place they should be informed, that our blessed Saviour has appointed two ordinances to be observed by all his followers to the end of the world, which are usually called sacraments.

The one is *baptism*, wherein persons are to be washed with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy Spirit, to signify their being given up to *Christ* as his disciples, or professors of Christianity; and as an emblem of that purity of heart and life, which, as such, they must aim at and endeavour after.

The other is the *Lord's supper*, wherein bread is broken and wine is poured out, and distributed, to be eaten and drank by Christians in remembrance of the body of *Christ*, which was put to a bloody death, as a sacrifice to obtain pardon for the sins of men.

The first of these, namely, *baptism*, is but once to be administered to any person; but the last, namely, the *Lord's supper*, is to be frequently performed, to keep us always in mind of the death of *Christ*, till he comes again from heaven to judge the world.

This is the *sum and substance of the Christian religion*, drawn out into a very few plain articles: and I think a child of common capacity, who is arrived at three or four years of age, may be taught some part of these articles, and may learn to understand them all at seven, or eight, or nine; at least so far as is needful, for all his own exercises of devotion and piety. As his age increases, he may be instructed more at large in the principles and practices of our holy religion, as I shall shew more particularly in the third section.

SECT. II.

The Exercise and Improvement of their natural Powers.

HAVING mentioned *religion* as the principal thing in which children should be instructed, I proceed to say, in the second place, that *children should be taught the true use, the exercise, and improvement of their*

natural powers: and we may for order ſake diſtinguiſh theſe into the powers of the body, and thoſe of the mind: now though nature gives theſe powers and faculties, yet it is a good education that muſt inſtruct us in the exerciſe and improvement of them: otherwiſe, like an uncultivated field, they will be ever barren and fruitleſs, or produce weeds and briers, inſtead of herbs and corn.

Among the *powers of the mind* which are to be thus cultivated, we may reckon the *underſtanding*, the *memory*, the *judgment*, the faculty of *reaſoning*, and the *conſcience*.

1. *Teach them to uſe their underſtanding aright.* Perſuade them to value their underſtanding as a noble faculty, and allure them to ſeek after the enrichment of it with a variety of knowledge. Let no day eſcape without adding ſome new ideas to their underſtanding, and giving their young unfurniſhed minds ſome further notion of things.

Almoſt every thing is new to a child, and novelty will entice them onward to new acquiſitions: ſhew them the birds, the beaſts, the fiſhes and inſects, trees, herbs, fruits, and all the ſeveral parts and properties of the vegetable and the animal world: teach them to obſerve the various occurrences in nature and providence, the ſun, moon, and ſtars, the day and night, ſummer and winter, the clouds and the ſky, the hail, ſnow, and ice, winds, fire, water, earth, air, fields, woods, mountains, rivers, *&c.* Teach them that the great God made all theſe things, and his providence governs them all. Acquaint a child alſo with domeſtic affairs ſo far as is needful, and with the things that belong to the civil and the military life, the church and the ſtate, with the works of God and the works of men. A thouſand objects that ſtrike their eyes, their ears, and all their ſenſes, will furniſh out new matter for their curioſity and your inſtructions.

There are ſome books which are publiſhed in the world, wherein a child may be delightfully led into the knowledge of a great number of theſe things by

pictures, or figures of birds, beasts, *&c.* well graven, with their names under them: this will much assist the labour of the teacher, and add to the pleasure of children in their daily learning.

You who instruct them, should allure their young curiosity to ask many questions, encourage them in it, and gratify their inquiries, by giving them the best and most satisfactory answers you can frame, and accommodate all your language to their capacity.

Give them, as far as possible, clear ideas of things, and teach them how to distinguish one thing from another by their different appearances, by their different properties, and by their different effects. Shew them how far some things agree with others, and how far they differ from them; and above all things teach them, as far as their young understandings will admit, to distinguish between appearances and realities, between truth and falsehood, between good and evil, between trifles and things of importance; for these are the most valuable pieces of knowledge and distinction, which can be lodged in the young understandings of children.

2. The *memory* is another faculty of the soul, which *should be cultivated and improved:* endeavour carefully to impress on their minds things of worth and value. Such are, short and useful and entertaining stories, which carry in them some virtue recommended, some vice ridiculed or punished; various human and divine truths, rules of piety and virtue, precepts of prudence, *&c.* Repeat these things often to them by day and by night; teach them these things in verse and in prose; rehearse them in their ears at all proper seasons, and take occasion to make them repeat these things to you.

Be solicitous to know what it is they learn when they are out of your sight, and take good care that their memories be not charged with trifles and idle trumpery. The memory is a noble repository or cabinet of the soul; it should not be filled with rubbish and lumber. Silly tales and foolish songs, the comm-

drums of nurſes, and the dull rhimes that are ſung to lull children aſleep, or to ſooth a froward humour, ſhould be generally forbidden to entertain thoſe children where a good education is deſigned. Something more innocent, more ſolid and profitable, may be invented inſtead of theſe fooleries. If it were poſſible, let a very few things be lodged in the memory of children which they need to forget when they are men.

The way to ſtrengthen and improve the memory, is to put it upon daily exerciſe. I do not mean that young children ſhould be kept ſo cloſe to their book as to be crammed with leſſons all the day long, and made to receive and ſuſtain a heavy load every hour. The powers of the ſoul (eſpecially ſuch as act in cloſe concert with the body, and are ſo much aided by the brain) may be over-burdened, and injured, as well as the limbs: the mind may be perplexed and confounded, the head may be overſtrained and weakened, and the health impaired in thoſe tender years of life, by an exceſſive impoſition on the memory: the teachers of children ſhould have ſome prudence, to diſtinguiſh their ages and their ſeveral capacities: they ſhould know how to avoid extremes.

But in general it may be ſaid, that *the powers of the mind, as well as thoſe of the body, grow ſtronger by a conſtant and moderate exerciſe.* Every day let the memory of a child be entruſted with ſomething new: every day let ſome leſſon be learned: and every Lord's-day at leaſt, even in their youngeſt years, let them learn by heart ſome one text of ſcripture (chiefly that on which the miniſter preaches): this will grow up in time to a conſiderable treaſure of ſcriptural knowledge, which will be of unſpeakable uſe to them in the Chriſtian life. I have known children, who from their early years have been conſtantly trained up and taught to remember a few ſentences of a ſermon beſides the text, and by this means have grown up by degrees to know all the diſtinct parts and branches of a diſcourſe, and in time to write down half the ſermon after they came home, to their own conſolation, and the improvement

of their friends: whereas those who have been never taught to use their memories in their younger parts of life, lose every thing from their thoughts when it is past off from their ears, and come home from noble and edifying discourses, pleased (it may be) with the transient sound, and commending the preacher, but uninstructed, unimproved, without any growth in knowledge or piety.

3. The *judgment* is another natural power of the mind, which *should be exercised and improved in children.* They should be taught to *pass no judgment on men or things rashly or suddenly*, but to withhold their judgment till they see sufficient reason to determine them. To this end, shew them, in little common instances, how often they are deceived when they judge on a sudden, without due consideration, and how often they are forced to change their opinions. Put them in mind how soon they have found themselves mistaken, when they have given their opinions too hastily. This will make them cautious, and afraid of being so rash, either in praising one thing or in condemning another.

Teach them to judge, not merely by *outward shew and appearance, but by searching things to the bottom.* Convince them that every man who hath fine clothes is not rich, and that every man who talks hard words is not wise or learned; that every one who wears a red coat is not a soldier; nor is every person good-humoured, who speaks very complaisant things in company. Take frequent occasion to shew them, how much they will be mistaken if they judge immediately by outward appearances of things.

Tell them, that they must not judge of things *by custom, nor by the common opinions of the multitude, nor by the practices of the rich and the great*; for all these things may deceive them: but that they must judge of things merely by reason, except in matters of religion, and there they must judge rather by scripture or the word of God. Let them know, that *customs* change and alter, and the customs of one age or of one nation differ greatly from those of another; but that the na-

ture and the reaſon of things is ſtill the ſame, and that ſcripture is the conſtant and unchangeable rule of our religion.

To confirm this, let them be informed that it was the cuſtom of our anceſtors in *England*, and it is now the cuſtom in *France* and *Spain* to ſay their prayers in *Latin*, and to worſhip images: but it is a ſinful *cuſtom*, though the *multitudes* of the common people agree in it, and though the *great and the rich* practiſe it alſo. Nor is our preſent cuſtom in *Great Britain*, of praying in *Engliſh*, and worſhipping no images, to be eſteemed the right way of worſhip, becauſe it is the cuſtom of the nation, but becauſe it is agreeable to the word of God, which forbids us to worſhip images, or to pray in an unknown tongue.

Take every occaſion to guard them againſt prejudices, and paſſing a judgment on men or things upon inſufficient grounds.

4. The *reaſoning powers of the mind ſhould be cultivated and improved in children.* This is very near akin to the former, and therefore I ſhall be very brief here.

Whenſoever children give you their opinion of any thing, aſk them to give you alſo the reaſon why they are of that opinion: whenſoever they deſire or wiſh for any thing, or ſhew an averſion to it, inquire what is the reaſon of their deſire or averſion: when they have done any thing of their own will, aſk them the reaſon why they did it. And when you do any thing that is for their good, ſhew them the reaſon why you do it, and convince them that it was fit and neceſſary to be done, though perhaps it was not ſo pleaſing to them.

By calling their young *reaſon* thus into exerciſe, you will teach them *wiſdom* betimes: you will awaken manly thoughts within them, and ſoon lead them to a rational and manly conduct in their childiſh years: by this means alſo you will always have a handle to take hold of, in order to perſuade them to their duty, and to ſave them from miſchief. But if their *reaſoning powers* be neglected, you will train them up like the

horſe and the mule who have no underſtanding: they will grow like brutes in the ſhape of men, and reaſon will have but little power over them in the following parts of life.

5. *Conſcience* is another natural power of the ſoul, wherein the principles of virtue and rules of duty to God and man are to be laid up: it is ſomething within us that calls us to account for our faults, and by which we paſs a judgment concerning ourſelves and all our actions.

Children have a *conſcience* within them, and it ſhould be awakened early to its duty. They ſhould be taught to reflect and look back upon their own behaviour, to call themſelves often to account, to compare their deeds with thoſe good rules and principles laid up in their minds, and to ſee how far they have complied with them, and how far they have neglected them. Parents ſhould teach their children to pay a religious reſpect to the inward dictates of virtue within them, to examine their actions continually by the light of their own conſciences, and to rejoice when they can approve themſelves to their own minds, that they have acted well according to the beſt of their knowledge: they ought alſo to attend to the inward reproofs of conſcience, and mourn, and be aſhamed, and repent when they have ſinned againſt their light. It is of admirable uſe toward all the practices of religion and every virtue, to have conſcience well ſtored with good principles, and to be always kept tender and watchful; it is proper that children ſhould learn to reverence and obey this inward monitor betimes, that every wilful ſin may give their conſciences a ſenſible pain and uneaſineſs, and that they may be diſpoſed to ſacrifice every thing elſe to conſiderations of conſcience, and to endure any extremities rather than act contrary to it.

I proceed in the next place to conſider, the *ſeveral powers of the body* which ought to be regulated and managed by the due inſtruction of children in their younger years. Now as the God of nature has given

children eyes, and tongues, and feet, and arms, and hands, it is expedient that parents ſhould teach their children the proper uſe of them.

1. The God of nature hath given them *eyes*. Let their parents teach them to uſe theſe eyes aright. Would it be amiſs in me here to give a hint or two of this kind? May not children be warned againſt a ſtaring look, againſt ſtretching their eye-lids into a glare of wildneſs? may they not be forbid to look aſide on any object in a ſquinting manner, when their faces are turned another way? ſhould they not be inſtructed to look directly with their face turned to the thing they look at? May they not be taught with due courage to look in the face of the perſon they ſpeak to, yet with an humble modeſt aſpect, as befits a child? A becoming courage and a becoming modeſty dwell much in the eye.

Some children ſhould be often admoniſhed to lay aſide a gloomy and a frowning look, a ſcowling air, an uneaſy and forbidding aſpect. They ſhould be taught to ſmooth the ruffles of their brow, and put on a lively, pleaſing, and cheerful countenance among their friends: ſome there are who have all theſe graces by nature, but thoſe who have them not may be corrected and ſoftened by the care of parents in younger years *.

2. Let parents teach children to uſe their *tongues* properly and agreeably; not only to ſpeak, but to pronounce their words plain and diſtinct. Let them be inſtructed to keep due and proper diſtances between their words and ſentences, and not ſpeak in a ſwift hurry, with a tumult of ſyllables and clutter upon their

* It may here be recollected by the way, that a gloomineſs of aſpect does not always ariſe from a malignity of temper, but ſometimes from fear of diſpleaſing and incurring reproof; and is therefore often to be removed by ſpeaking kindly to children, and encouraging them with expreſſions of candour and tenderneſs. To know how in ſuch caſes to divert a child, and make him cheerful and happy in the company of a parent, is none of the leaſt important cares of education.

lips, which will ſound like a foreign gibberiſh, and never be underſtood. Nor ſhould they drawl out their words in a ſlow long tone, which is equally ungraceful and diſagreeable.

There are two other common faults in ſpeaking, and where they are found they ſhould be corrected early in children.

The one is *liſping*, which is a pronunciation of the letter S or Z, or C before E and I, as though it were TH. Thus, inſtead of *ſpice* they cry *thpithe*, inſtead of *ceaſe* they ſay *theathe*. This may be cured by teaching them to pronounce a few ſuch words as theſe, where the ſound of the letter S prevails, with their teeth ſhut cloſe; and by forbidding them to put their tongue between their teeth at any time, except when *th* is to be pronounced.

The other fault is *ſtammering*, which I ſuppoſe may be commonly prevented or cured by teaching children not to ſpeak much, and to ſpeak ſlow always; and they ſhould be warned againſt all anger or haſtineſs, or eagerneſs of ſpirit; for ſuch a temper will throw out their words faſter than the organs of ſpeech can accommodate themſelves to form the ſyllables, and thus bring a hurry and confuſion into their ſpeech: and they ſhould alſo gain a good degree of courage or becoming aſſurance, and not ſpeak with much concern or fear; for fear will ſtop the organs of ſpeech, and hinder the formation of words.

But I inſiſt no longer on the uſe of the *tongue* in ſpeaking.

3. As God hath given them *feet*, let parents teach them to ſtand firm and ſtrong, and to walk in a becoming and decent manner, without waddling from ſide to ſide, without turning either or both of their feet inward, without little jerks in their motion, or long ſtrides, or any of thoſe awkwardneſſes which continue with many perſons to old age, for want of having theſe irregularities corrected when they were young. Children ſhould be indulged in their ſports, ſometimes in running ſwiftly, and in leaping, where there is no danger, in

order to exercise their limbs, and make them pliant and nimble, strong and active on all occasions.

As to their *arms and hands*, they were formed, not to lie folded in the bosom, but to be engaged in some useful work; and sometimes, with due moderation, in robust and hardy exercise and toil; not so as to overstrain their joints, but to acquire firmness of strength by exercise.

And more especially, they who are to get their bread by their hands, should be inured to toilsome and vigorous labours almost from their infancy: they should be accustomed to work in heat and cold, and to bear rougher exercises and fatigues of body, that they may be fit to endure hardships, and go through those difficulties which their station of life may call them to, without any injury or inconveniency. And it is desirable, that the sons of all families should be in some degree inured to such difficulties as these, which men of all ranks are sometimes called to encounter.

If some fond and tender mothers had brought up their children in this hardy manner, they had not now, in all human probability, been mourning over their graves. In their younger years, they would scarcely let them set the sole of their foot to the ground, nor suffer the wind to blow upon them: thus they grew up in a state of tenderness and infirmity, sickly and feeble creatures: a sudden heat or a cold seized them; their natures, which were never accustomed to bear hardship, were unable to resist the enemy; a fever kindled in their blood, or a catarrh or cough injured their lungs, and early buried their parents hopes in the dust.

Thus I have finished the *second general head of instruction*, that is, children should be instructed to *exercise and improve their natural powers*, both of *mind* and *body*: and this is one necessary part of a good education, which parents and other teachers should attend betimes.

SECT. III.

Self-Government.

CHILDREN should be instructed in the art of self-government. They should be taught (as far as possible) to govern their *thoughts*: to use their *wills* to be determined by the light of their *understandings*, and not by head-strong and foolish humour; they should learn to keep the lower powers of nature under the command of their *reason*: they should be instructed to regulate their *senses*, their *imagination*, their *appetites*, and their *passions*. Let it be observed that I speak of these things in this place, not as a part of religion, though they are an important part of it, but give it as a direction exceedingly useful to all the purposes of human life in this world.

1. *Their thoughts and fancies should be brought under early government.* Children should be taught, as far as possible, to keep their *thoughts* and *attention* fixed upon what is their proper business; and to withhold them from roving and wandering away from the work in which they are engaged. Many children have such wild fluttering fancies, that they will not be easily confined to fix upon one object for any considerable time: every flying feather, every motion of any person or thing that is near them, every sound, or noise, or shadow, calls them away from their duty. When they should employ their eyes on their book or their work, they will be gazing at every thing besides their task; they must rise often to the window to see what passes abroad, when their business lies within.

This volatile humour, if not gently altered and wisely corrected in early years, will have an unhappy influence to hinder them for ever from attaining any great excellence in whatsoever business they undertake. Children should be taught therefore to call in their

wandering thoughts, and bind them to the work in hand, till they have gone through it and finiſhed it.

Yet this ſort of wandering folly ſhould not be chaſtized ſeverely in young children, nor ſhould it be ſubdued with violence, by too cloſe and rigorous a confinement to many long hours of labour or ſtudy, in that early and tender part of life; ſuch a conduct might break or overwhelm an active and ſprightly genius, and deſtroy all thoſe ſeeds of curioſity which promiſe well for maturer years: but proper and agreeable methods ſhould be uſed to perſuade and incline the young learner to attend to his preſent employment. It is far better to fix the thoughts to duty by allurement than by ſeverity; but ſome way or other it ought to be endeavoured, at leaſt in a good degree.

This fixedneſs of the mind and active powers, is not only of great ſervice to attain uſeful knowledge, or to learn any buſineſs in common life, but it is of conſiderable advantage in religion, in attendance on divine worſhip, either prayer, preaching, or meditation; where the mind is ſubject to a thouſand diſtractions, for want of being taught to fix the attention in younger years. Perſons who have well learned the art of *governing their thoughts*, can purſue a train of thinking while they walk through the ſtreets of *London*, nor will the noiſe and hurry of that buſy place break the thread of their meditations. A happy attainment this, and a felicity which but few arrive at!

2. Children ſhould be alſo inſtructed to *govern their inclinations and wiſhes*, and to determine their wills and their choice of things, not by humour and wild fancy, but by the dictates of reaſon. Some perſons, even in their mature years, can give no other account why they chooſe and determine to do this or that, but becauſe they have a fancy for it, and they will do it. *I will becauſe I will*, ſerves inſtead of all other reaſons. And in the ſame manner they manage their refuſal or diſlike of any thing. *I hate to do this thing; I will not go to this place, nor do that work; I am reſolved againſt it;* and all from mere humour. This is a conduct very

unbecoming a reasonable creature; and this folly should be corrected betimes, in our early parts of life, since God has given us understanding and reason to be the guide of our resolutions, and to direct our choice and all our actions.

3. *Appetite* is another thing which *should be put under strict government*, and children should be taught betimes to restrain it. That of the *taste* is the first thing that gets the ascendant in our younger ears, and a guard should be set upon it early. What an unbecoming thing is it for children to be craving after every dish that comes to a table? and that they will generally do, if they have never been taught to bridle their craving. They must eat of all the pickles and sauces and high-seasoned meats, and gorge themselves with a medley of inconsistent dainties; and without any restraint, lest little *master* should be froward, or lest little *miss* should grow out of humour with her dinner. How often do they make a foul inroad on their health by excess of eating, being tempted farther than nature requires by every luscious bit which is within their sight? how frequently doth this indulgence vitiate their stomach, ruin their constitution, weaken the springs of nature, and destroy the powers of animal life betimes? how many graves are filled, and funeral vaults crowded with little carcases which have been brought to untimely death by the foolish fondness of a parent or a nurse, giving the young creatures leave to eat every thing they desire? or if they happen by strength of constitution to survive this pestilence, how often do they grow up young gluttons, and place their happiness in the satisfaction of the taste? they are deaf to all the rules of virtue and abstinence all their lives, because they were never taught to deny themselves when they were young. O it is a mean and shameful thing to be a slave to our taste, and to let this brutal appetite subdue reason and govern the man! But if appetites must be gratified in the child, they will grow strong in the years of youth, and a thousand to one but they overpower the man also.

Let but fond parents humour their little offspring, and indulge their children to ſip wine frequently, and they will generally grow up to the love of it long before nature needs it; and by this means they will imagine drams are daily neceſſary for their ſupport, by that time they are arrived at the age of man or woman. Thus nature is ſoon burnt up, and life pays for the deadly draught. The foundation of much gluttony and drunkenneſs, of many diſeaſes that ariſe from intemperance, and of many an untimely death, is laid in the nurſery.

An *exceſs of niceneſs in pleaſing the palate*, is a fooliſh and dangerous humour, which ſhould never be encouraged by parents, ſince the plaineſt food is moſt healthful for all perſons, but eſpecially for children; and in this reſpect they ſhould be under the conduct of their elders, and not always chooſe for themſelves. This conduct and diſcipline will train them up to virtue and ſelf-denial, to temperance and frugality, to a reliſh of plain and wholeſome food, to the pleaſures of active health, and to a firm and cheerful old age.

The indulgence of a nice appetite in children, is not only the reaſon why they are ſo often ſick, but at the ſame time it makes them ſo humorous and ſqueamiſh, that they can ſcarcely be perſuaded to ſwallow a medicine which is neceſſary for their recovery. What a long, tedious, and tireſome buſineſs is it to wait on ſome children whole hours together, while all the ſoft perſuaſions and flatteries of a mother cannot prevail with them to take a naufeous ſpoonful, or a bitter *bolus*, though their life may ſeem to depend on it? They have been taught to make an idol of their taſte, and even in the view and peril of death, they can hardly be perſuaded to affront their idol, and diſpleaſe their palate with a draught, or even a pill, which diſguſts it.

There are other *appetites* (if I may ſo call them) beſide that of the *taſte*, which children are ready to indulge too far, if not limited and corrected by the wiſdom of their parents. *Their eyes are never ſatisfied with*

seeing, nor their ears with hearing. Some young persons cannot hear of a fine show but they must needs see it; nor can they be told of a concert of music, but they must needs hear it, though it creates an expence beyond their circumstances, and may endanger their health or their virtue.

I confess freely, that I would recommend the sight of uncommon things in nature or art, in government civil or military, to the curiosity of youth. If some strange wild beasts and birds are to be shown, if lions and eagles, ostriches and elephants, pelicans or rhinoceroses, are brought into our land, if an ingenious model of *Solomon*'s temple, or some nice and admirable clock-work, engines, or moving pictures, *&c.* be made a spectacle to the ingenious; if a king be crowned, or a public triumph proceed through the streets; when an army is reviewed by a prince, when an ambassador makes a public entry, or when there is a public trial of criminals before a judge, I will readily allow these sights are worthy of the attendance of the younger parts of mankind; once at least, where it may be done with safety, and without too great hazard or expence. Most of these are things which are not often repeated, and it is fit that the curiosity of the eyes should be so far gratified, as to give people once in their lives an opportunity of knowing what these things are, that their minds may be furnished with useful ideas of the world of nature or art, and with some notion of the great and uncommon scenes and appearances of the civil life. But for children to haunt every public spectacle, to attend with constancy every lord mayor's show, to seize every opportunity of repeating these sights, suffering nothing to escape them that may please their senses, and this too often without any regard to their religion, their virtue, or their health, this is a vanity which ought to be restrained by those to whom God and nature hath committed the care of their instruction, and who have a just and natural authority over them. But of this, and some other subjects akin to it, I may have occasion to speak more in the following

parts of this discourse, when I professedly treat on the article of restraint.

Thus I have shown how the appetites and inclinations of children should be put under discipline, and how they may be taught *self-government* in this respect.

4. The *passions* or *affections* are the last thing which I shall mention: these appear very early in children to want a regulation and government. They *love* and *hate* too rashly, and with too much vehemence; they *grieve* and *rejoice* too violently and on the sudden, and that for mere trifles; their *hopes* and *fears*, their *desires* and their *aversions*, are presently raised to too high a pitch, and upon very slight and insufficient grounds. It becomes a wise parent to watch over these young emotions of their souls, and put in a word of prudent caution, as often as they observe these irregularities.

Let children be taught early, that the little things for which they are so *zealous*, for which they *grieve* or *rejoice* so impetuously, are not worthy of these affections of their souls; shew them the folly of being so *fond* of these trifles, and of *vexing* and *growing fretful* for the loss of them. Inform them what a happiness it is to have few *desires* and few *aversions*, for this will preserve them from a multitude of sorrows, and keep their temper always serene and calm: persuade them never to raise their *hopes* very high of things in this world, and then they will never meet with great disappointments. Teach them moderation in all these workings of their spirits; and inform them, that their passions should never be laid out thus on objects which do not deserve them, nor rise higher than the occasion requires.

Teach bashful and timorous children, that they need be *ashamed* of nothing but what is evil; that they should *fear* God in the first place, and serve him, and then they need not be *afraid* of men, or of any thing that threatens mischief to them; for the Almighty God will be their friend and defence. Engage their fear and their love in the first place on God, the most proper and supreme object of them; let their hope,

their joys, and their ſorrows, as ſoon as poſſible, be tinctured with religion: ſet their young affections at work on the moſt needful and important objects of them in early life, and this will have a ſweet and powerful influence on the better regulation of them with regard to all ſenſible things.

Above all, let them know that they muſt govern their *anger*, and not let it break out on every ſlight occaſion. It is *anger* that is eminently called *paſſion* among children, and in the language of common life. This therefore ſhould eminently have a conſtant guard ſet upon it. Shew them how unreaſonable and unmanly a thing it is to take fire at every little provocation: how honourable and glorious to forgive an injury; how much like God, and like the beſt of men. Let them know what *Solomon* would inform them, that *the patient in ſpirit is better than the proud in ſpirit: that he who is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his ſpirit, better than he that taketh a city.* Teach them to put away their little quarrels and reſentments, and to forget and bury them in love. Let them be put in mind, that though *anger* may happen to riſe a little in a good man, yet *it reſts* and abides only *in the boſom of a fool*; and therefore they ſhould never grow ſullen, *nor let the ſun go down upon their wrath.*

The occaſions of childiſh reſentment, and the riſings of anger, are ready to return often, and therefore they ſhould often have ſuch warnings given them and ſuch inſtructions repeated. Tell them how lovely a thing it is to be meek and free from paſſion, and how much ſuch children are beloved of all. Inſtruct them how much it tends to their own peace, to ſuffer nothing to ruffle and diſcompoſe them: and when their little hearts are ready to ſwell and grow big within them, and their wrath takes ſudden fire, put in ſome pretty ſoft word to cure the return of this inward ſwelling, to quench the new flame that is kindling in their boſom, and to aſſuage the riſing ſtorm. Teach them by degrees to get an habitual conqueſt over this diſorder

of nature in youth, and you will lay a foundation for their deliverance from a thouſand miſchiefs in the following years and events of life.

This ſhall ſuffice for the third head of *inſtruction*, which relates to *ſelf-government:* I have dwelt the longer upon it, becauſe it is of ſo great and evident importance towards the eaſe and happineſs of life, as well as ſo conſiderable a part of religion; and men can hardly ever get ſo ſucceſsful a victory over themſelves, unleſs they begin when they are children.

SECT. IV.

The common Arts of Reading and Writing.

THE next thing that I ſhall mention as a matter of inſtruction for children, is the *common arts of reading, ſpelling, and writing.*

Writing is almoſt a divine art, whereby thoughts may be communicated without a voice, and underſtood without hearing: to theſe I would add ſome ſmall knowledge of *arithmetic or accounts*, as the practice of it is in a manner ſo univerſal in our age, that it does almoſt neceſſarily belong to a tolerable education.

The knowledge of *letters*, is one of the greateſt bleſſings that ever God beſtowed on the children of men: by this means, mankind are enabled to preſerve the memory of things done in their own times, and to lay up a rich treaſure of knowledge for all ſucceeding generations.

By the *art of reading*, we learn a thouſand things which our eyes can never ſee, and which our own thoughts would never have reached to: we are inſtructed by books in the wiſdom of ancient ages; we learn what our anceſtors have ſaid and done, and enjoy the benefit of the wiſe and judicious remarks which they have made through their whole courſe of life, without the fatigue of their long and painful experiments. By this means children may be led, in a great

meaſure, into the wiſdom of old age. It is by the *art of reading* that we can ſit at home, and acquaint ourſelves with what has been done in the diſtant parts of the world. The hiſtories and the cuſtoms of all ages and all nations are brought, as it were, to our doors. By this art we are let into the knowledge of the affairs of the *Jews*, the *Greeks*, and the *Romans*, their wars, their laws, and their religion; and we can tell what they did in the nations of *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*, above a thouſand years ago.

But the greateſt bleſſing that we derive from *reading*, is the knowledge of the Holy Scriptures, wherein God has conveyed down to us the diſcoveries of his wiſdom, power, and grace, through many paſt ages; and whereby we attain the knowledge of *Chriſt*, and of the way of ſalvation by a Mediator.

It muſt be confeſſed, that, in former ages, before *printing* was invented, the *art of reading* was not ſo common even in polite nations, becauſe books were much more coſtly, ſince they muſt be all written with a pen, and were therefore hardly to be obtained by the bulk of mankind: but ſince the providence of God has brought *printing* into the world, and knowledge is ſo plentifully diffuſed through our nation at ſo cheap a rate, it is a pity that any children ſhould be born and brought up in *Great Britain* without the *ſkill of reading*; and eſpecially ſince by this means, every one may ſee with his own eyes, what God requires of him in order to eternal happineſs.

The *art of writing* alſo is ſo exceedingly uſeful, and is now grown ſo very common, that the greateſt part of children may attain it at an eaſy rate: by this means we communicate our thoughts and all our affairs to our friends at ever ſo great a diſtance: we tell them our wants, our ſorrows, and our joys, and intereſt them in our concerns, as though they were near us. We maintain correſpondence and traffic with perſons in diſtant nations, and the wealth and grandeur of *Great Britain* is maintained by this means. By the *art of writing*, we treaſure up all things that concern us in a

ſafe repoſitory; and as often as we pleaſe, by conſulting our paper records, we renew our remembrance of things that relate to this life or the life to come: and why ſhould any of the children of men be debarred from this privilege, if it may be attained at a cheap and eaſy rate, without intrenching upon other duties of life, and without omitting any more neceſſary buſineſs that may belong to their ſtation?

I might add here alſo, *true ſpelling* is ſuch a part of knowledge as children ought to be acquainted with, ſince it is a matter of ſhame and ridicule in ſo polite an age as ours, when perſons who have learned to handle the pen cannot write three words together without a miſtake or blunder; and when they put letters together in ſuch an awkward and ignorant manner, that it is hard to make ſenſe of them, or to tell what they mean.

Arithmetic, or the *art of numbers*, is, as was obſerved before, to be reckoned alſo a neceſſary part of a good education. Without ſome degrees of this knowledge, there is indeed no traffic among men. And eſpecially is it more needful at preſent, ſince the world deals much more upon truſt and credit than it did in former times; and therefore the art of keeping accounts is made, in ſome meaſure, neceſſary to perſons even in meaner ſtations of life, below the rank of merchants or great traders. A little knowledge of the art of accounts is alſo needful, in ſome degree, in order to take a true ſurvey, and make a juſt judgment of the common expences of a perſon or a family: but this part of learning, in the various degrees of it, is more or leſs uſeful and needful, according to the different ſtations and buſineſſes for which children are deſigned.

As the ſons of a family ſhould be educated in the knowledge of *writing*, *reading*, *ſpelling*, and *accounts*, ſo neither ſhould the daughters be trained up without them. *Reading* is as needful for one ſex as the other: or ſhould girls be forbidden to handle the *pen*, or to caſt up a few figures, ſince it may be very much for their advantage in almoſt all circumſtances of life, ex-

cept in the very loweſt rank of ſervitude or hard labour. And I beg leave here to entreat the female youth, eſpecially thoſe of better circumſtances in the world, to maintain their ſkill in *writing* which they have already learned, by taking every occaſion to exerciſe it: and I would fain perſuade them to take pains in acquainting themſelves with *true ſpelling*, the want of which is one reaſon why many of them are aſhamed to *write*; and they are not aſhamed to own and declare this, as though it were a juſt and ſufficient excuſe for neglecting and loſing the uſe of the pen.

SECT. V.

Of a Trade or Employment.

IN a good education it is required alſo that children, in the common ranks of life, be brought up to the *knowledge of ſome proper buſineſs or employment for their lives; ſome trade or traffic, artifice or manufacture*, by which they may ſupport their expences, and procure for themſelves the neceſſaries of life, and by which they may be enabled to provide for their families in due time. In ſome of the *eaſtern* nations, even perſons of the higheſt rank are obliged to be educated in ſome employment or profeſſion; and perhaps that practice has many advantages in it: it engages their younger years in labour and diligence, and ſecures from the miſchievous effects of ſloth, idleneſs, vanity, and a thouſand temptations.

In our nation I confeſs it is a cuſtom to educate the children of noblemen, and the eldeſt ſons of the gentry, to no proper buſineſs or profeſſion, but only to an acquaintance with ſome of the ornaments and accompliſhments of life, which I ſhall mention immediately. But perhaps it would be far happier for ſome families, if the ſons were brought up to buſineſs, and kept to the practice of it, than to have them expoſed to the pernicious inconveniencies of a ſauntering and

idle life, and the more violent impulse of all the corrupt inclinations of youth.

However, it is certain that far the greater part of mankind must bring up their children to some regular business and profession, whereby they may sustain their lives and support a family, and become useful members to the state. Now in the choice of such a profession or employment for children, many things are to be consulted.

(1.) *The circumstances and estate of the parent*; whether it will reach to place out the child as an apprentice, to provide for him materials for his business or trade, and to support him till he shall be able to maintain himself by his profession. Sometimes the ambition of the parent and the child, hath fixed on a trade far above their circumstances; in consequence of which the child hath been exposed to many inconveniencies, and the parent to many sorrows.

(2.) *The capacity and talents of the child must also be considered.* If it be a profession of hard labour; hath the child a healthy and firm constitution, and strength of body equal to the work? If it be a profession that requires the exercise of fancy, skill, and judgment, or much study and contrivance; then the question will be, hath the lad a genius capable of thinking well, a bright imagination, a solid judgment? Is he able to endure such an application of mind as is necessary for the employment?

(3.) *The temper and inclination of the child must* be brought into this consultation, in order to determine a proper business for life. If the daily labour and business of a man be not agreeable to him, he can never hope to manage it with any great advantage or success. I knew a *bricklayer*, who professed that he had always an aversion to the smell of *mortar*: and I was acquainted once with a lad who begun to learn *Greek* at school, but he complained it did not agree with his constitution. I think the first of these ought to have been brought up to work in glass or timber, or any thing rather than in bricks: as for the other (to my

beſt remembrance), he was wiſely diſpoſed of to a calling wherein he had nothing to do with *Greek*.

And here I would beg leave to deſire, that none might be encouraged to purſue any of the learned profeſſions, that is, *divinity*, *law*, or *phyſic*, who have not the ſigns of a good genius, who are not patient of long attention and cloſe application to ſtudy, who have not a peculiar delight in that profeſſion which they chooſe, and withal a pretty firm conſtitution of body; for *much ſtudy is a wearineſs to the fleſh*, and the vigour of nature is ſooner impaired by laborious thoughtfulneſs than by the labour of the limbs.

(4.) It ſhould be alſo the ſolicitous and conſtant care of parents, when they place out their children in the world, to ſeek out maſters for them who profeſs ſerious religion, who practiſe all moral virtues, and keep good orders and good hours in their family. The neglect of this concern has been the ruin of a thouſand youths in our day; and notwithſtanding the ſenſible miſchief ariſing from this negligence, yet there is ſtill too little care taken in a matter of ſo great importance *.

Thus much for this part of the *education of ſons*. But you will ſay then, what buſineſs of life muſt daughters be brought up to? I muſt confeſs when I have ſeen ſo many of this ſex, who have lived well in the time of their childhood, grievouſly expoſed to many hardſhips and poverty upon the death of their parents, I have often wiſhed there were more of the callings or employments of life peculiarly appropriated to *women*, and that they were regularly educated in them, that there might be a better proviſion made for their ſupport. What if all the garments which are worn by

* This danger ariſes in a great degree from the immoderate love of pleaſures, that ſo generally prevails, and leads maſters into parties and engagements, eſpecially on the Lord's-day; which not only occaſions the neglect of religious inſtruction and family-prayer on the evening of it, but ſets an example to ſervants which they think themſelves authorized to follow, though it be generally to their own deſtruction.

women, were ſo limited and reſtrained in the manufacture of them, that they ſhould all be made only by their own ſex? This would go a great way toward relief in this caſe: and what if ſome of the eaſier labours of life were reſerved for them only? But this is not my province.

However it may be as to this matter, it is the cuſtom of the nation, and indeed it hath been the cuſtom of moſt nations and ages, to *educate daughters* in the knowledge of things that relate to the affairs of the houſehold, to ſpin and to uſe the needle, both for making garments and for the ornaments of embroidery: they have been generally employed in the preparation of food, in the regular diſpoſal of the affairs of the houſe for the conveniencies and accommodations of human life, in the furniture of the rooms, and the elegancies of entertainment. *Sarah* made *ready three meaſures of meal and kneaded it, and made cakes upon the hearth*, Gen. xviii. 6. And the *women of* Iſrael *that were wiſe-hearted, did ſpin with their hands, both blue, and purple, and ſcarlet, and fine linen, for the tabernacle*, Exod. xxxv. 25. *Women ſhall bake your bread*, Lev. xxvi. 16. *Women ſew pillows and make kerchiefs*, Ezek. xiii. 18. which words, though perhaps they are a metaphor in that text, yet denote the office or work of women. And *Dorcas made coats and garments for the poor*, Acts ix. 36. 39. I might cite many ancient Heathen authors to prove the ſame thing among the *Greeks* and *Romans*, if it were needful.

Some of theſe things are the conſtant labours and cares of women in our day, whereby they maintain themſelves: the moſt laborious parts of them belong to the poor. And it is the opinion of the beſt judges, that, even in ſuperior and wealthy circumſtances, every daughter ſhould be ſo far inſtructed in them, as to know when they are performed aright, that the ſervant may not uſurp too much power, and impoſe on the ignorance of the miſtreſs. Nature and providence ſeem to have deſigned theſe offices for the ſex in all ages and in all nations, becauſe while the men are en-

gaged in harder and more robuſt labours, and are often called abroad on buſineſs, the women are more generally accuſtomed to keep houſe and dwell at home; and the word of God, as well as the cuſtom of human life, recommends it. *Tit.* ii. 5. 1 *Tim.* v. 14.

SECT. VI.

Rules of Prudence.

ALL children ſhould have ſome inſtruction given them *in the conduct of human life, ſome neceſſary rules of prudence,* by which they may regulate the management of their own affairs, and their behaviour towards their fellow-creatures. Where all other ſorts of knowledge are conferred upon children, if this be wanting, they make but a contemptible figure in the world, and plunge themſelves into many inconveniencies.

Some of theſe *rules of prudence* are of a *general* nature, and neceſſary at all times, and upon all occaſions: others are more *particular*, and proper to be uſed according to the various occurrences of life.

If I were to inquire what are the *foundations of human prudence*, I ſhould rank them under theſe three heads.

1. *A knowledge of ourſelves.* Here every one ſhould be taught to conſider within himſelf, what is my temper and natural inclination; what are my moſt powerful appetites and my prevailing paſſions; what are my chief talents and capacities, if I have any at all; what are the weakneſſes and follies to which I am moſt liable, eſpecially in the days of youth; what are the temptations and dangers that attend me; what are my circumſtances in the world; and what my various relations to mankind round about me; what are my conſtant, and what my occaſional duties; what are the inward or outward advantages that attend me, or the diſadvantages under which I labour. A wiſe and juſt

ſurvey of all theſe things, and keeping them always in mind, will be of unſpeakable uſe to us in the conduct of life, that we may ſet our chief guard upon our weak ſide, and where our greateſt dangers lie; that we may employ our talents aright, and ſeize all advantages to improve them for the beſt purpoſe, and proceed in the ſhorteſt way to piety, uſefulneſs, and peace.

2. *The knowledge of mankind* is alſo neceſſary to acquire prudence. And here young perſons ſhould not only be taught what is the general nature and capacity, the virtues and the vices, and the follies of mankind; but they ſhould be informed alſo, or at leaſt ſhould be taught to obſerve more particularly, what are the peculiar tempers, appetites, paſſions, powers, good and evil qualities of the perſons with whom they have moſt to do in the world; that they may learn to behave wiſely with regard to others, and that they may make a proper improvement of all the brighter and darker characters which they obſerve amongſt men, both for their own advantage and for the benefit of their fellow-creatures. This may have a happy influence to lead them to avoid the vices and follies which have plunged others into miſchief, to imitate the virtues of thoſe who have behaved well in life, and to ſecure themſelves from any dangers and miſeries, as well as to pity the weakneſſes and ſorrows of mankind, and afford them a willing and cheerful relief.

3. *The knowledge of the things of the world, and the various affairs of human life*, muſt be included as one of the chief foundations of *prudence*. It would be endleſs to run over particulars of this kind; but in a ſpecial manner young perſons ſhould apply themſelves to know thoſe things which moſt nearly concern them, and which have the moſt immediate relation to their own buſineſs and duty, to their own intereſt and welfare: and it is a valuable part of wiſdom to neglect other things, and not to waſte our time and ſpirits in them, when they ſtand in any competition with our proper and moſt important work, whether we conſider ourſelves as men or as Chriſtians.

Solomon tells us, *Eccleſ.* iii. 1. 17. and viii. 5, 6. *There is both time and judgment for every work, and for every purpoſe under the heaven:* and that *a wiſe man's heart diſcerneth both time and judgment;* that is, he judgeth well concerning what is to be done, and the time when to do it: and therefore *the miſery of man is great upon him,* becauſe he knows not this *time* and *judgment,* he doth neither diſcern what is proper to be done, nor the proper ſeaſon of doing it. *Prudence* conſiſts in judging well what is to be ſaid, and what is to be done, on every new occaſion; when to lie ſtill, and when to be active; when to keep ſilence, and when to ſpeak; what to avoid, and what to purſue; how to act in every difficulty; what means to make uſe of to compaſs ſuch an end; how to behave in every circumſtance of life, and in all companies; how to gain the favour of mankind in order to promote our own happineſs, and to do the moſt ſervice to God and the moſt good to men, according to that ſtation we poſſeſs, and thoſe opportunities which we enjoy.

For this purpoſe there is no book better than the *Proverbs of Solomon.* Several of the firſt chapters ſeem to be written for young men, under the name of *Solomon's* ſon: and all the reſt of them ſhould be made familiar to youth by their frequent converſe with them, and treaſuring them up in their head and heart.

Among human writings of this kind, perhaps the book called *Eccleſiaſticus,* though it be among the *apocryphal* writings, is equal to the beſt of the ancients. And among the moderns, I know not a better collection than the little book of *Directions, Counſels, and Advices,* lately publiſhed by Dr. *Fuller* for the uſe of his ſon; though I could wiſh he had rendered it univerſally acceptable to all readers, by avoiding ſome ſeverities on the other ſex; and that he had ſpared his little railleries on the name of *ſaints,* though thoſe offenſive ſentences are but few.

SECT. VII.

The Ornaments and Accompliſhments of Life.

THE laſt part of *inſtruction* which I include in the idea of a good education, is an *inſtruction of youth in ſome of the uſeful ornaments and accompliſhments of life.*

It has been the cuſtom of our nation, for perſons of the middle and the lower ranks of life, who deſign their children for trades and manufactures, to ſend them to the *Latin* and *Greek* ſchools. There they wear out four or five years of time in learning a number of ſtrange words, that will be of very little uſe to them in all the following affairs of their ſtation: and this very learning alſo, is generally taught in a very tireſome and moſt irrational method, when they are forced to learn *Latin* by Grammars and rules written in that unknown tongue. When they leave the ſchool they uſually forget what they have learned, and the chief advantage they gain by it, is to ſpell and pronounce hard words better when they meet them in *Engliſh*: whereas this ſkill of *ſpelling* might be attained in a far ſhorter time and at an eaſier rate by other methods *, and much of life might be ſaved and improved to better purpoſes.

As for the ſons of thoſe who enjoy more plentiful circumſtances in the world, they may be inſtructed in the *Latin* and *Greek* languages for ſeveral valuable ends in their ſtation: and eſpecially thoſe who deſign the learned profeſſions, ought thoroughly to underſtand them; and ſuch as purſue the ſtudy of *divinity* muſt be acquainted alſo with *Hebrew* and *Chaldee*, that they may read the Old Teſtament in its original language as well as the New.

The *French* is now-a-days eſteemed alſo an accompliſhment to both ſexes. If they have time enough,

* See my *Art of Reading and Writing*, chap. xxi.

which they know not how to employ better, and a good memory, I would not forbid it. There are ſeveral good books written in that language which are not unworthy of our peruſal: and there are many words now introduced in the *Engliſh* language, borrowed and derived from thence, as well as from the *Latin* and *Greek*; ſo that it may not be improper for an *Engliſh* gentleman to learn theſe tongues, that he may underſtand his own the better. I add alſo, that if perſons have much acquaintance with the *French* nation, or have occaſion to converſe with foreigners at court or in the city, or if they deſign to travel abroad, the *French* is a neceſſary tongue, becauſe it is ſo much ſpoken in *Europe*, and eſpecially in courts. But otherwiſe, there are ſo many of the valuable writings of *French* authors perpetually tranſlated into *Engliſh*, that it is a needleſs thing to go through much difficulty, or take much pains in attaining it. I am inclined to believe that (except in the caſes above mentioned) few have found the profit anſwer the labour. As for thoſe perſons who are bred up to traffic with other nations, they muſt neceſſarily learn the language of thoſe nations; and this I reckon not among their accompliſhments, but conſider it as rather a part of their proper buſineſs in life.

In ſhort, it is a thing of far greater value and importance, that youth ſhould be perfectly well ſkilled in reading, writing, and ſpeaking their native tongue in a proper, a polite and graceful manner, than in toiling among foreign languages. It is of more worth and advantage to gentlemen and ladies to have an exact knowledge of what is decent, juſt, and elegant in *Engliſh*, than to be a critic in foreign tongues. The very knowledge of foreign words ſhould be improved to this purpoſe: and in order to obtain this accompliſhment, they ſhould frequently converſe with thoſe perſons and books which are eſteemed polite and elegant in their kind.

Thus far concerning the knowledge of *words*. But the knowledge of *things* is of much more importance.

1. The young gentry of both ſexes ſhould be a little acquainted with *logic*, that they may learn to obtain clear ideas; to judge by reaſon and the nature of things; to baniſh the prejudices of infancy, cuſtom, and humour; to argue cloſely and juſtly on any ſubject; and to caſt their thoughts and affairs into a proper and eaſy method.

2. Several parts of *mathematical* learning are alſo neceſſary ornaments of the mind, and not without real advantage: and many of theſe are ſo agreeable to the fancy, that youth will be entertained and pleaſed in acquiring the knowledge of them.

Beſides the common *ſkill in accounts* which is needful for a trader, there is a variety of pretty and uſeful rules and practices in *arithmetic*, to which a gentleman ſhould be no ſtranger: and if his genius lie that way, a little inſight into *algebra* would be no diſadvantage to him. It is fit that young people of any figure in the world, ſhould ſee ſome of the ſprings and clues whereby ſkilful men, by plain rules of reaſon, trace out the moſt deep, diſtant, and hidden queſtions; and whereby they find certain anſwers to thoſe inquiries, which at firſt view ſeem to lie without the ken of mankind, and beyond the reach of human knowledge. It was for want of a little more general acquaintance with mathematical learning in the world, that a good *algebraiſt* and a *geometer* were counted conjurers a century ago, and people applied to them to ſeek for loſt horſes and ſtolen goods.

They ſhould know ſomething of *geometry*, ſo far at leaſt as to underſtand the names of the various lines and angles, ſurfaces and ſolids: to know what is meant by a right line or a curve, a right angle and an oblique, whether acute or obtuſe: how the quantity of angles is meaſured, what is a circle, a ſemicircle, an arch, a quadrant, a degree and minute, a diameter and radius: what we mean by a triangle, a ſquare, a parallelogram, a polygon, a cube, a pyramid, a priſm, a cone, an ellipſis or oval, an hyperbola, a parabola, *&c.* and to know ſome of the moſt general properties of angles,

triangles, ſquares, and circles, *&c.* The world is now grown ſo learned in *mathematical* ſcience, that this ſort of language is often uſed in common writings and in converſation, far beyond what it was in the days of our fathers. And beſides, without ſome knowledge of this kind, we cannot make any farther progreſs towards an acquaintance with the arts of *ſurveying*, *meaſuring*, *geography*, and *aſtronomy*, which are ſo entertaining and ſo uſeful an accompliſhment to perſons of a polite education.

Geography and *aſtronomy* are exceedingly delightful ſtudies. The knowledge of the lines and circles of the globes, of heaven and earth, is counted ſo neceſſary in our age, that no perſon of either ſex is now eſteemed to have had an elegant education without it. Even tradeſmen and the actors in common life ſhould, in my opinion, in their younger years, learn ſomething of theſe ſciences, inſtead of vainly wearing out ſeven years of drudgery in *Greek* and *Latin*.

It is of conſiderable advantage as well as delight for mankind, to know a little of the *earth* on which they dwell, and of the *ſtars and ſkies* that ſurround them on all ſides. It is almoſt neceſſary for young perſons (who pretend to any thing of inſtruction and ſchooling above the loweſt rank of people) to get a little acquaintance with the ſeveral parts of the *land and the ſea*, that they may know in what quarter of the world the chief cities and countries are ſituated; that at the mention of the word *Copenhagen*, they may not groſsly blunder and expoſe themſelves (as a certain gentleman once did), by ſuppoſing it to be the name of a *Dutch* commander. Without this knowledge we cannot read any hiſtory with profit, nor ſo much as underſtand the common news-papers.

It is neceſſary alſo to know ſomething of the *heavenly bodies*, and their various motions and periods of revolution, that we may underſtand the accounts of time in paſt ages, and the hiſtories of ancient nations, as well as know the reaſons of day and night, ſummer and winter, and the various appearances and places of

the moon and other planets. Then we ſhall not be terrified at every eclipſe, or preſage, and foretel public deſolations at the ſight of a comet: we ſhall ſee the ſun covered with darkneſs, and the full moon deprived of her light, without foreboding imaginations that the government is in danger, or that the world is come to an end. This will not only increaſe rational knowledge, and guard us againſt fooliſh and ridiculous fears, but it will amuſe the mind moſt agreeably; and it has a moſt happy tendency to raiſe in our thoughts the nobleſt and moſt magnificent ideas of God by the ſurvey of his works, in their ſurpriſing grandeur and divine artifice.

3. *Natural philoſophy*, at leaſt in the more general principles and foundations of it, ſhould be infuſed into the minds of youth. This is a very bright ornament of our rational natures, which are inclined to be inquiſitive into the cauſes and reaſons of things. A courſe of philoſophical experiments, is now frequently attended by the ladies as well as gentlemen, with no ſmall pleaſure and improvement. God and religion may be better known, and clearer ideas may be obtained of the amazing wiſdom of our Creator, and of the glories of the life to come, as well as of the things of this life, by the rational learning and the knowledge of nature that is now ſo much in vogue. If I were to recommend a book or two on this ſubject, which may uſefully be read by the ladies as well as gentlemen, I know none better than Mr. *Ray*'s Wiſdom of God in the Creation, Dr. *Derham*'s Diſcourſes on the ſame ſubject, the Archbiſhop of *Cambray*'s Treatiſe of the Exiſtence of God, at leaſt to the fiftieth ſection, *Nieuwenteit*'s Religious Philoſopher, and Dr. *Mather*'s Chriſtian Philoſopher. Theſe things will enlarge and refine the underſtanding, improve the judgment, and bring the faculty of reaſoning into a juſter exerciſe, even upon all manner of ſubjects.

4. *Hiſtory* is another accompliſhment of youth and ornament of education. The narratives of the various occurrences in nations, as well as in the lives of parti-

cular persons, slide into younger minds with pleasure. These will furnish the soul in time with a treasure of knowledge, whence to derive useful observations, inferences, and rules of conduct. These will enable us to gratify our acquaintance, by rehearsing such narrations at proper seasons, and render our own company agreeable and useful to mankind.

5. Nor can our education be called completely elegant without something of *poesy*, in so very polite an age as this.

While I mention some knowledge of *poesy* as a proper ornament of youth, I would not be understood as though I recommended *verse-making* to every young gentleman and lady. It is an old proverb, that *poets are born, and not made.* And though I have been too far betrayed by an unguarded inclination, into attempts of this kind, in some of my former years, yet while I sometimes repent of having laid out so many days and hours of a short life in writing verses, I will not encourage others to practise it, unless they are blest with a brighter genius, and find an insuperable bent and bias of soul that way: and even then, let it be a diversion and not a business.

The thing therefore which I here recommend to persons of a polite education, is some acquaintance with good verse. To read it in the best authors, to learn to know, and taste, and feel a fine stanza, as well as hear it, and to treasure up some of the richest sentiments and expressions of the most admired writers, is all that I mean in this advice.

Nor is this a mere amusement or useless embroidery of the mind. It brightens and animates the fancy with a thousand beautiful images, it enriches the soul with many great and sublime sentiments and refined ideas, it fills the memory with a noble variety of language, and furnishes the tongue with speech and expression suited to every subject. It teaches the art of describing well, and of painting every thing to the life, and dressing up all the pleasing and the frightful scenes of nature and providence, vice and virtue, in their pro-

per charms and horrors. It aſſiſts us in the art of perſuaſion, it leads us into a pathetic manner of ſpeech and writing, and adds life and beauty to converſation.

How often have we been enabled to gild a gloomy hour of life, and to ſoften a rough and painful occurrence, by meditating and repeating the lines of ſome great poet? Between the colours and the harmony that belong to verſe, our ſenſes and our ſouls are ſometimes ſweetly entertained in a ſolitary retirement; and ſometimes we entertain our friends agreeably, we regale them as with muſic and painting at once, and gladden the whole company.

But *poetry* hath ſtill ſome ſublimer powers. It raiſes our dying religion to a heavenly degree, and kindles a flame of holy love and joy in the heart. If the memory be well ſtored with devout ſongs, we ſhall never be at a loſs for divine meditation: we may exalt the praiſes of God and our Saviour at all times, and feel our ſouls borne up as on the wings of angels, far above this duſky globe of earth, till we have loſt all its flattering vanities and its painful vexations. Poeſy was firſt deſigned for the ſervice of religion, and dedicated to the Temple. *Moſes* and *David* made divine and illuſtrious uſe of it. The royal pſalmiſt is raiſed on the wing of inſpiration and ſacred verſe, far above the level of the *Jewiſh* ceremonies and ſhadows, and converſes with heavenly things, and ſheds abroad the glories of the future *Meſſiah*, amidſt the raptures of his ſublime and inimitable poeſy.

But it is time to deſcend and mention ſome of the *accompliſhments of animal nature*. The firſt of this kind, and perhaps the neareſt to *poeſy*, is the *art of ſinging*. A moſt charming gift of the God of nature, and deſigned for the ſolace of our ſorrows and the improvement of our joys. Thoſe young perſons who are bleſt with a muſical ear and voice, ſhould have ſome inſtruction beſtowed on them, that they may acquire this delightful ſkill. I am ſorry that the greateſt part of our ſongs, whereby young gentlemen and ladies are taught to practiſe this art, are of the amorous kind, and ſome

of them polluted too. Will no happy genius lend a helping hand to reſcue muſic from all its defilements, and to furniſh the tongue with a nobler and more refined melody? But *ſinging* muſt not be named alone.

Various *harmony both of the wind and ſtring* were once in uſe in divine worſhip, and that by divine appointment. It is certain then, that the uſe of theſe inſtruments in common life is no unlawful practice, though the New Teſtament has not ordained the uſe of it in evangelical worſhip. But if the voice be happily capable of this art, it is preferable to all inſtruments faſhioned and compoſed by man: this is an organ formed and tuned by God himſelf. It is moſt eaſily kept in exerciſe, the ſkill is retained longeſt, and the pleaſure tranſcends all the reſt. Where an ode of noble and ſeraphic compoſure is ſet throughout to muſic and ſung by an artful voice, while the ſpirit at the ſame time enjoys a devout temper, the joys of the ſoul and the ſenſe are united, and it approaches to the ſcriptural ideas of the celeſtial ſtate. Happy the youth who has a bright and harmonious conſtitution, with a pious turn of ſoul, a cheerful ſpirit, and a reliſh of ſacred melody! He takes a frequent flight above this lower world, beyond the regions of ſenſe and time; he joins the concert of the heavenly inhabitants, and ſeems to anticipate the buſineſs and the bleſſedneſs of eternity.

Shall I be allowed after this, to mention *drawing* and *painting* as agreeable amuſements of polite youth? Where the genius leads that way it is a noble diverſion, and improves the mind. Nature has her ſhare in this as well as in *poeſy*; where nature inclines, let polite youth be taught to ſketch a little on paper; let them have at leaſt ſome taſte of theſe arts, ſome capacity of being pleaſed with a curious draught, a noble painting, an elegant ſtatue, and fine reſemblances of nature. This is an ingenious and a graceful acquirement. Mr. *Richardſon*'s Eſſay on the Theory of Painting, is the beſt book that I know on that ſub-

ject; and sufficient to give a young gentleman a general knowledge of the art.

Shall I now name the art of *fencing* and of *riding the managed horse*, as an accomplishment for gentlemen? These are exercises of a healthy kind, and may be useful in human life. Shall I speak of *dancing*, as a modish accomplishment of both sexes? I confess, I know no evil in it. This also is a healthful exercise, and it gives young persons a decent manner of appearance in company. It may be profitable to some good purposes, if it be well guarded against all the abuses and temptations that may attend it. It was used of old in sacred and civil rejoicing, *Exod.* xv. 20, 21. 2 *Sam.* vi. 14. 1 *Sam.* xviii. 6. It is certainly an advantage to have the body formed early to graceful motion, to which the art of dancing may have contributed. But where it is much beloved and indulged, it has most sensible dangers, especially mixed dancing. It leads youth too often and too early into company; it may create too much forwardness and assurance in the sex, whose chief glory is their modesty; it may kindle vain and vicious inclinations, and raise in young minds too great a fondness for the excessive gaieties and licentious pleasures of the age.

In all these affairs a wise parent will keep a watchful eye upon the child, while he indulges it in these gratifications of youth and inclination: a wise parent will daily observe, whether the son or the little daughter begin to be too much charmed with any of the gay ornaments and amusements of life; and, with a prudent and secret solicitude, will take care lest any of them intrench on the more necessary and more important duties of life and religion. And according to this view of things, the parent's hand will either give a looser rein to the pursuit of these exercises, or will manage the propensities of the child with a needful and becoming restraint.

But among all the accomplishments of youth, there is none preferable to a decent and agreeable behaviour among men, a modest freedom of speech, a soft and

elegant manner of addreſs, a graceful and lovely deportment, a cheerful gravity and good humour, with a mind appearing ever ſerene under the ruffling accidents of human life: add to this, a pleaſing ſolemnity and reverence when the diſcourſe turns upon any thing ſacred and divine, a becoming neglect of injuries, a hatred of calumny and ſlander, a habit of ſpeaking well of others, a pleaſing benevolence and readineſs to do good to mankind, and ſpecial compaſſion to the miſerable; with an air and countenance, in a natural and unaffected manner, expreſſive of all theſe excellent qualifications.

Some of theſe, I own, are to be numbered among the *duties* and *virtues*, rather than among the *ornaments* of mankind: but they muſt be confeſſed to be *ornaments* as well as *virtues*. They are *graces* in the eye of man as well as of God. Theſe will beſpeak the affection of all that know us, and engage even an ill-natured world betimes in our favour. Theſe will enable the youth of both ſexes, who are ſo happy to attain them, to enter upon the ſtage of life with approbation and love, to paſs through the world with eaſe (as far as eaſe may be expected in ſo degenerate and unhappy a ſtate of things), to finiſh the ſcenes of action on earth with applauſe, and to leave behind them the monument of a good name, when their bodies ſleep in the duſt, and their ſouls dwell with God.

SECT. VIII.

A Guard againſt evil Influences from Perſons and Things.

IT belongs alſo to a good education, that *children be guarded and ſecured (as far as poſſible) from all evil influences and unhappy impreſſions, which they may be expoſed to receive both from perſons and things.* I ſhall ſufficiently explain this direction by particular inſtances.

Let not nurſes or ſervants be ſuffered to fill their minds with *ſilly tales and with ſenſeleſs rhimes*, many of

which are so absurd and ridiculous, that they will not bear to be represented in a grave discourse. The imagination of young creatures is hereby flattered and deceived: their reason is grosly abused and imposed upon: and by this means they are trained up to be amused with follies and nonsense, rather than to exercise their understanding, which is the glory of human nature.

Let not any persons that are near them terrify their tender minds with dismal *stories of witches and ghosts, of devils and evil spirits, of fairies and bugbears in the dark.* This hath had a most mischievous effect on some children, and hath fixed in their constitutions such a rooted slavery and fear, that they have scarcely dared to be left alone all their lives, especially in the night. These stories have made such a deep and frightful impression on their tender fancies, that it hath enervated their souls, it hath broken their spirits early, it hath grown up with them, and mingled with their religion, it hath laid a wretched foundation for melancholy and distracting sorrows. Let these sort of informations be reserved for their firmer years, and let them not be told in their hearing, till they can better judge what truth or reality there is in them, and be made sensible how much is owing to romance and fiction.

Nor let their little hearts be frighted at three or four years old with *shocking and bloody histories, with massacres and martyrdoms, with cuttings and burnings, with the images of horrible and barbarous murders, with racks and red-hot pincers, with engines of torment and cruelty, with mangled limbs, and carcases drenched in gore.* It is time enough, when their spirits are grown a little firmer, to acquaint them with these madnesses and miseries of human nature. There is no need that the history of the holy confessors and martyrs should be set before their thoughts so early in all their most ghastly shapes and colours. These things, when they are a little older, may be of excellent use to discover to them the wicked and bloody principles of persecution, both among the *Heathens* and the *Papists*; and to teach

them the power of the grace of *Chriſt*, in ſupporting theſe poor ſufferers under all the torments which they ſuſtained for the love of God and the truth.

Let their ears be ever kept from all *immodeſt ſtories, and from wanton ſongs: from riddles and puns with double meanings and foul intentions:* let them not be ſuffered to *read wanton jeſts or amorous romances:* and due care ſhould be taken to remove all books out of their way that may defile their imagination, or teach them the language or the ſentiments of impurity. Nor let their eyes be entertained with *lewd and unclean pictures*, and *images of things or actions that are not fit to be expoſed.* Theſe things indeed have too often an unhappy influence to corrupt the fancy and the manners; and in riper years have been the occaſion of numberleſs miſchiefs: but eſpecially they ſhould be kept far away from the ſight or hearing of children, leſt too deep and dangerous impreſſions be made in thoſe early years of life. Nothing but what is chaſte, pure, and innocent, ſhould come within the reach of their eyes and ears. Even the common neceſſities and actions of nature, ſhould be always expreſſed before them in the moſt modeſt forms of ſpeech that our mother-tongue can furniſh us with. In this reſpect (as the poet ſays), children ſhould be treated with great reverence.

Maxima debetur pueris reverentia.

It is confeſſed that books of anatomy, and other parts of neceſſary ſcience, are proper to be written; and theſe may be conſulted by perſons who are grown up to a due age, eſpecially by thoſe whoſe profeſſion requires it. There is alſo ſome neceſſity of foul narratives, where foul crimes are committed, and ought to be publicly expoſed and brought to juſtice and puniſhment. As the affairs of mankind ſtand, theſe things cannot always be avoided: but there is no manner of neceſſity that children ſhould read them, or raſh unguarded youth.

For ſome of the reaſons before-mentioned, there ſhould be a wiſe conduct in ſhewing children what parts of the Bible they ſhould read: for though the word of God expreſſeth all things with due decency, yet there are ſome things which have been found neceſſary to be ſpoken of in ſcripture, both in the laws of *Moſes* and in the repreſentation of the wickedneſs of the *Gentiles* in the New Teſtament, in which adult perſons have been concerned, which there is no neceſſity for children to read and hear, and they may be paſſed over or omitted among them. The *Jews* were wont to withhold *Solomon*'s *Song* from their children till they were thirty years old: and the late pious and prudent Biſhop *Tillotſon* (in a manuſcript which I have ſeen) wiſhes that thoſe parts of the Bible wherein there are ſome of the affairs of mankind expreſſed *too naturally* (as he calls it) were omitted in the public leſſons of the church: I think they may as well be excepted alſo out of the common leſſons of children, and out of the daily courſe of reading in family-worſhip.

Let parents take as much care as they can, in the *choice of companions and play-fellows* for their ſons and their daughters. It would be a happy thing if children, who are bred up in ſchools, could be ſecured from the company and evil influence of other children, who curſe and ſwear, who take the name of God in vain, and uſe filthy and unclean language. Maſters and miſtreſſes ſhould be very watchful and ſtrict in their inquiries into the behaviour of their ſcholars of both ſexes when they are out of their ſight, that if it were poſſible there might not be one among them whoſe lips are impure or profane: for one diſeaſed ſheep may infect the whole flock. However, where children find ſuch immorality practiſed by any of their fellows, they ſhould be taught to ſhew their utmoſt abhorrence of it, and ſpeedily forſake ſuch pernicious company.

SECT. IX.

A Guard ſet on the Sports and Diverſions of Children.

AS parents ſhould take care to have their children employed in proper learning and buſineſs, ſo they ſhould not think it beneath them to *concern themſelves a little about their ſports and recreations.* Human nature, eſpecially in younger years, cannot be conſtantly kept intent on work, learning, or labour. There muſt be ſome intervals of pleaſure to give a looſe to the mind, and to refreſh the natural ſpirits. Too long and intenſe a confinement to one thing, is ready to over-tire the ſpirits of youth, and to weaken the ſprings of activity by exceſſive fatigue. It is an old ſimile on this occaſion, and a very juſt one, that a bow kept always bent will grow feeble and loſe its force. The alternate ſucceſſions of buſineſs and diverſion, preſerve the body and ſoul of children in the happieſt temper: and learning is more cloſely purſued, and work better done after ſome agreeable relaxations. The young creatures apply themſelves to their buſineſs with new vigour after the enjoyment of ſome pleaſurable releaſe.

I confeſs it would be a conſiderable advantage, if the various parts of learning and buſineſs in which children are employed, were ſo happily contrived, that one might be as it were a relaxation or diverſion, when the mind is tired with the other: and if the children have a taſte and reliſh of reading and improvement of the mind, there is a rich variety of entertainment to be found in books of poetry, hiſtory, accounts of the wonders of art and nature, as well as ingenious practices in mechanical and mathematical affairs. It is happieſt indeed, where this reliſh is the gift of nature; yet children may be trained up by wiſe and alluring methods, to delight in knowledge, and to chooſe ſuch ſort of recreations, eſpecially in winter-nights and rainy ſeaſons, when they cannot enjoy the more active diver-

ſions abroad. Yet beſides theſe, ſome other ſorts of ſports will generally be found neceſſary for children of almoſt all diſpoſitions.

And their ſports ought to be ſuch as are in ſome meaſure choſen by themſelves, that they may be matter of delight, yet ſtill under the regulation of the eye and prudence of a parent. No ſort of play ſhould be permitted, wherein ſacred things become a matter of jeſt or merriment. No ſport ſhould be indulged wherein foul language, ill names, or ſcandal are practiſed; wherein there is any violation of modeſty, or of the rules of decency and cleanlineſs; nothing muſt be ſuffered wherein there is any breach of the moral precepts of the law of God; wherein cozening or cheating, falſehood or lying, are practiſed or allowed. They ſhould be confined to honeſty, juſtice, truth, and goodneſs, even in their very play.

They ſhould not be permitted to uſe ſuch ſporting as may tend to diſcompoſe their ſpirits, diſorder their nature, injure their fleſh, prejudice their health, break their limbs, or do miſchief to themſelves, or each other. This ſhould rather be the play of dogs or horſes than of children.

Nor ſhould they ever be allowed to practiſe thoſe diverſions that carry an idea of barbarity and cruelty in them, though it be but to brute creatures. They ſhould not ſet up *cocks* to be banged with cudgels thrown at them about *Shrove-tide*; nor delight in giving a tedious lingering death to a young litter of *dogs* or *cats*, that may be appointed to be deſtroyed and drowned, leſt they multiply too much in a houſe: nor ſhould they take pleaſure in pricking, cutting, or mangling young *birds* which they have caught, nor uſing any ſavage and bloody practices towards any creatures whatſoever, leſt their hearts grow hard and unrelenting, and they learn in time to practiſe theſe cruelties on their own kind, and to murder and torture their fellow-mortals; or at leaſt to be indifferent to their pain and diſtreſs, ſo as to occaſion it without remorſe.

They ſhould never be ſuffered to game for money, nor even for their own toys or play-things if they are coſtly and expenſive: many ſore inconveniencies in riper years ariſe from ſuch indulgences. And indeed no recreations ſhould be accounted lawful, but thoſe in which they can with courage recommend themſelves to God, and deſire his bleſſing upon them.

Thoſe children who are kept pretty cloſe to learning in a ſchool, ſhould be directed to purſue their recreations, as much as may be, in the open air; and to exerciſe their limbs with vigour and activity, that their growth and health may not be impaired by ſtudy, and too much confinement to a book. But in very foul weather, or in long winter-evenings (as I hinted before) they may be taught to ſeek ſuch diverſions as may at once refreſh and improve their minds.

For want of this, in ſome families the games of *draughts* and *cheſs* are practiſed, and ſome other little ſports upon a cheſs-board, without any ſtakes or aim at gain, beyond the mere pleaſure of victory. In other houſes, *cards* and *dice* are introduced, for want of better recreations. The former of theſe, namely, *draughts* and *cheſs*, are innocent enough, and may wear off a heavy hour, when the mind or body are unfit for buſineſs: the latter have had the general cenſure of our wiſe and pious fathers, and there have been moſt unhappy effects attending them: and indeed, theſe games are ſeldom uſed without depoſiting too much money as the ſtake; and this tends to engage the paſſions with greater vehemence than the nature of a *recreation* can require, or ſhould admit. But I leave it to thoſe who are more ſkilful in caſuiſtic divinity, to prove them abſolutely unlawful in the very nature of the game.

However that be, I have often earneſtly wiſhed, that inſtead of all theſe games, there were ſome more profitable ſports invented for a long evening, for a dull hour, or a rainy ſeaſon: and I am well aſſured, that if ſome ingenious mind, which is well ſkilled in mathematical learning and in games, would but take pains to contrive ſome ſuch diverſions, there might be a much

better account given of the hours of leisure and remission of business by persons of both sexes, and of all ages, than can be at present, for want of such useful and improving recreations.

What if *cards* and *dice* should be proved to be ever so lawful in themselves, yet there might be various inventions, of much more advantage to knowledge and virtue, placed in the room of them. May not some little tablets of pasteboard be made in imitation of *cards*, which might teach the unlearned several parts of grammar, philosophy, geometry, geography, astronomy, *&c.*

What if on one side of these tablets or charts a town or city were named and described, and on the other side the county, province, and kingdom where that town stands, with some geographical or historical remark on it: and whosoever in play draws the *chart* with the town on it, should be obliged to tell the county where it stands, and the remark on it?

What if on one side were a geometrical figure, and on the other the demonstration of some property belonging to it?

What if one side bore the name or figure of any piece of money; and the other all the multiples of it by the nine digits, or as far as twelve? This would be useful for children bred up to a trade.

What if the figure of some plant, animal, engine, or any thing else in the world of nature or art, were printed on one side; and on the other the name of the thing, which should be required to be spelled right by young scholars when they see the figure, in order to teach them the art of spelling. And if to this were added some beautiful expression or description of the thing, taken out of our best *English* poets, to be repeated by him who draws the chart which has the figure on it.

Or if on one side were a word in *English*, and on the other the same thing expressed in *Latin*, *Greek*, or *French*, for such who learn those languages.

Or if ſingle names of famous men and women were on one ſide; and the reverſe contained the hiſtory, or ſome ſhort account, of thoſe perſons whoſe names are ſo famous.

What if in a ſheet of paper, or a two-penny book, were written a hundred proverbs or wiſe ſayings, collected out of moraliſts, ancient and modern, relating to all the virtues and vices; and a collection of the moſt eminent examples of theſe vices and virtues were ſuperadded: and if one or more ſolid bodies of wood, of ſixteen, twenty, or thirty-two flat ſides were formed with the name of one virtue or vice inſcribed on each ſide; and by the trolling of this many-ſided toy, the uppermoſt word or name ſhould be an indication what proverb, or what example to require?

There have been, I confeſs, ſeveral ſorts of *cards* invented with proverbs, with various learned figures, and mathematical devices upon them: but, as far as I can learn, theſe have been but mere pictures and ornaments to the *hearts* and *diamonds*: theſe learned devices and figures have had no ſhare in the game: the *cards* are uſed like common *cards* ſtill, without any manner of improvement of any of the gameſters in theſe ſciences. But what I propoſe, is a contrivance to render theſe words, or figures, or ſentences, the very implements or engines of the ſport itſelf, without ſo much as the form of any *ſpade*, or *club*, or *heart*, or *diamond* drawn upon the chart or tablet.

Some of theſe exerciſes and diverſions, if happily contrived, may not only be fit to entertain children in their younger years, but may uſefully amuſe them when they are grown up toward manly age.

For my part, I own myſelf to be ſo much unſkilled in the various games uſed among us, that I am not fit to contrive, nor capable of inventing ſuch uſeful paſtime. But I wiſh ſome of the ſons of ingenuity had ſcience and virtue ſo much at heart, as to attempt ſuch a ſervice to mankind. And parents ſhould ſeek ſome ſort of delightful employments or recreations for the leiſure-hours of their ſons and their daughters, when

they are in the ſtage of youth, that they may be the more eaſily withheld from thoſe diverſions of the preſent age, which are ſo faſhionable and yet ſo dangerous.

Among theſe dangerous and modiſh diverſions, I cannot forbear to mention *midnight-aſſemblies*, *playhouſes*, *gaming-tables*, and *maſquerades*. Let parents who would willingly ſee their children walking in the paths of piety and virtue, endeavour to guard their inclinations from theſe enticing amuſements. The religion and conſcience of many a well-inclined youth, have been expoſed to great and imminent danger among thoſe ſcenes of vanity and folly, to ſay no worſe. My buſineſs is not to rail at them, though ſome of my readers will hardly forgive me that I deal with them ſo tenderly, and give them names of ſo ſoft a ſound. But this muſt be confeſſed, that if perſons of piety frequent them, they too much riſk their character and their innocence, and expoſe their virtue and their piety to great and needleſs temptations: or at leaſt by giving the ſanction of their preſence at ſuch places, and on ſuch occaſions, may make themſelves acceſſary to the ruin of thoſe who may be leſs fortified againſt their inſnaring tendency.

Yet ſome of theſe diverſions and amuſements are ſo charming to many a young thoughtleſs creature, that no riſk is thought too great to run, if they may but pleaſe their ears and their eyes, and gratify their idle and vain inclinations. Hence theſe *houſes of pleaſure* are filled and frequented: hence the *theatres* are crowded, and *gaming-rooms* attended by multitudes of youth, whoſe parents have enjoyed the bleſſing of a ſtricter education: and though their eſtate can ſcarcely ſupport their irregular expence, yet they gratify their children in theſe hazardous recreations, and take no pains to cure them of this pernicious folly.

But the children of our age will pertly reply, "What, we muſt live like no-body? Muſt we turn "old *Puritans* again? Muſt we look like fools in com- "pany, where there is ſcarcely any diſcourſe but of

" *plays*, *operas*, and *masquerades*, of *cards*, *dice*, and *mid-*
" *night-assemblies?* And pray what sin is there in any
" of them?"

To this I *answer*, that I am very sorry to find that the children of religious parents choose and delight in company where these things are the chief subject of conversation. I fear, lest God and virtue, and the important things of another world, are utterly banished out of such a visiting-room, where these discourses are the chief entertainment, and there is little place found for any profitable conversation, even about the most useful and valuable affairs of this life.

But, light as these pert questions are, I will consider them one after another. You say first, " Must
" we look like old *Puritans?* Must we live like no-
" body?" No, my friends, I am not persuading you to return to the habit and guise of your ancestors, nor to transact your visits, nor to model your diversions by the pattern of fourscore years ago. There is a certain fashion and appearance of things that belongs to every age: modes of conversation, and forms of behaviour, are ever changing in this life: and it is no improper thing for persons, according to their rank and figure in life, to conform themselves to the present customs, as far as they are innocent, and have no evil influence upon morality or religion. But where any unhappy customs prevail in the world that make an inroad upon your piety, that endanger your virtue, that break the good order of religious families, and are usually or always attended with some mischievous consequences, surely in these instances it is better to look like a Puritan, and stand almost alone, than to follow the multitude in the road that leads to iniquity and mischief. A *Puritan*, or a *Separatist* from the vain or dangerous courses of a vicious world, is to this day a name of lasting glory; though the enemies of God and of your ancestors, may cast it upon them in a way of reproach. There are some things in which you must dare to be singular, if you would be Christians, and especially in a corrupt and degenerate age. A sense of the love of

God secured to your hearts, and an inward peace of conscience, will infinitely countervail the enmity of the world, and overbalance the reproaches of an ungodly generation.

Besides, if the families that profess religion, and desire to preserve piety amongst them, and to transmit it down to their childrens children, would but heartily join together, in a resolved abstinence from these hazardous diversions, there would be no need of any one of you to stand alone, and your appearance on the side of virtue would not be singular. You might animate and support one another with public courage, and, having God and virtue on your side, you might, in some measure, bear down the effrontery and ridicule of an age of vice and sensuality; an age wherein comedies and masquerades, gaming-tables and midnight-assemblies are become the modish diversions.

But still it may be said, *What sin is there in any of them?* Bear with me then while I take them in order one after another, and briefly give my opinion concerning each of them.

1. Let us begin with the *playhouse*. It is granted, that a dramatic representation of the affairs of human life is by no means sinful in itself: I am inclined to think, that valuable compositions might be made of this kind, such as might entertain a virtuous audience with innocent delight, and even with some real profit. Such have been written in *French*, and have, in times past, been acted with applause. But it is too well known, that the comedies which appear on our stage, and most of the tragedies too, have no design to set religion or virtue in its best light, nor to render vice odious to the spectators. In many of them, piety makes a ridiculous figure, and virtue is dress in the habit of folly; the sacred name of God is frequently taken in vain, if not blasphemed; and the man of flagrant vice is the fine gentleman, and the poet's favourite, who must be rewarded at the end of the play.

Beſides, there is nothing will paſs on our theatres that has not the mixture of ſome amorous intrigue: lewdneſs itſelf reigns, and riots in ſome of their ſcenes: ſobriety is put quite out of countenance, and modeſty is in certain danger there: the youth of ſerious religion, that ventures ſometimes into this infected air, finds his antidotes too weak to reſiſt the contagion. The pleaſures of the cloſet and devout retirement are ſuſpended firſt, and then utterly vanquiſhed by the overpowering influence of the laſt comedy: the fancy is all over defiled, the vain images riſe uppermoſt in the ſoul, and pollute the feeble attempts of devotion, till by degrees ſecret religion is loſt and forgotten: and in a little time the playhouſe has got ſo much the maſtery of conſcience, that the young Chriſtian goes to bed after the evening-drama, with as much ſatisfaction and eaſe, as he uſed to do after evening-prayer.

If there have been found two or three *plays* which have been tolerably free from lewd and profane mixtures, there are ſome ſcores or hundreds that have many hateful paſſages in them, for which no excuſe can be made. And when all the charming powers of poeſy and muſic are joined with the gayeſt ſcenes and entertainments, to aſſault the ſenſes and the ſoul at once, and to drive out virtue from the poſſeſſion of the heart, it is to be feared that it will not long keep its place and power there. What a *prophet of their own* ſays of the *court*, may with much more truth and juſtice be ſaid of the *theatre:*

It is a golden, but a fatal circle,
Upon whoſe magic ſkirts a thouſand devils
In cryſtal forms ſit, tempting innocence,
And beckon early virtue from its centre.

Another of the poets of the town, who made no great pretences to virtue, and who well knew the qualities of the theatre, and its miſchievous influence, writes thus of it:

It would be endleſs to trace all the vice
That from the playhouſe takes immediate riſe.
It is the unexhauſted magazine
That ſtocks the land with vanity and ſin.
——————By flouriſhing ſo long,
Numbers have been undone, both old and young.
And many hundred ſouls are now unbleſt,
Which elſe had dy'd in peace, and found eternal reſt.

As for any of my friends who are not yet convinced of the juſtice of theſe cenſures, I entreat them to read what Mr. *Collier*, Mr. *Bedford*, and Mr. *Lawe* have written on this ſubject. And though I would by no means juſtify and ſupport every remark they have made, yet I think every reader who has a modeſt and pious ſoul, and has the cauſe of God and virtue near his heart, will be a little afraid to give his preſence there, leſt he ſhould ſeem to encourage ſuch incentives to iniquity and profaneneſs: or if he ſhould go thither once, merely to ſee and know what it is, I will perſuade myſelf he will not make it his practice, or frequent that houſe of infection.

But you will ſay, "There is ſome advantage to be "gained by theſe entertainments: there is a deal of "fine language in them, and faſhionable airs of con-"verſation: there are many of the fooleries of life "expoſed in the theatre, which ſuit not a more ſo-"lemn place; and comedies will teach us to know "the world, and to avoid the ridicule of the age."

But let my younger friends, who are ſo willing to improve in their knowledge of the world and politeneſs, remember, that whatſoever may be gotten, there is much more to be loſt among thoſe perilous and enticing ſcenes of vanity: the riſk of their virtue and ſerious religion, can never be recompenſed by the learning a few fine ſpeeches and modiſh airs, or the correction of ſome awkward and unfaſhionable piece of behaviour. This is to plunge headlong into the ſea, that I may waſh off a little dirt from my coat, or to venture on poiſon in order to cure a pimple.

Beſides, moſt or all of theſe ends might be attained by reading ſome few of the beſt of them in private: though I confeſs, I am cautious how I recommend this practice, becauſe I think that almoſt all theſe dramatic compoſures in our age, have ſome dangerous mixtures in them. Thoſe volumes of ſhort eſſays which are entitled the *Spectator*, will give a ſufficient knowledge of the ways of the world, and cure us of a hundred little follies, without the danger that there is in reading of plays: though even in thoſe very volumes, I could heartily wiſh that here and there a leaf were left out; wherein the writers ſpeak too favourably of the ſtage, and now and then (though rarely) introduce a ſentence that would raiſe a bluſh in the face of ſtrict virtue.

2. The next forbidden diverſion is the *maſquerade*. By all the deſcriptions that I have heard of it, it ſeems to be a very low piece of foolery, fitted for children and for perſons of a little and trifling genius, who can entertain themſelves at *blind-man's-buff*. And as the entertainment is much meaner than that of the theatre, ſo it is ſomething more hazardous to virtue and innocence. It does not ſo much as pretend to any ſuch improvement of the mind as the theatre profeſſes; while it lays a more dreadful ſnare to modeſty, and has made too often a diſmal inroad on the morals of thoſe that frequent it. Could I but perſuade perſons to read what the Right Reverend the late Lord Biſhop of *London* has publiſhed, in his ſermon for the *Reformation of Manners*, I am ready to think, that all thoſe who profeſs virtue, would *refrain their feet far from it, and not come near the doors of the houſe*. His words are theſe:

" Amongſt the various engines contrived by a cor-
" rupt generation to ſupport vice and profaneneſs, and
" keep them in countenance, I muſt particularly take
" notice of *maſquerades*, as they deprive virtue and
" religion of their laſt refuge, I mean *ſhame*, which
" keeps multitudes of ſinners within the bounds of de-
" cency, after they have broken through all the ties

" of principle and conſcience. But this invention " ſets them free from that tie alſo; being neither bet- " ter nor worſe, than an opportunity to ſay and do " there, what virtue, decency, and good manners will " not permit to be ſaid or done in any other place. If " perſons of either ſex will frequent lewd and profane " plays, or openly join themſelves to looſe and Atheiſti- " cal aſſemblies of any kind, they have their reward, " they are ſure to be marked and branded by all good " men, as perſons of corrupt minds and vicious incli- " nations, who have abandoned religion and all pre- " tences to it, and given themſelves over to luxury " and profaneneſs. And as bad as the world is, this " is a very heavy load upon the characters of men, " and in ſpite of all the endeavours of vice to bear up " and keep itſelf in countenance, it ſinks them by de- " grees into infamy and contempt. But this perni- " cious invention intrenches vice and profaneneſs a- " gainſt all the aſſaults and impreſſions of ſhame: and " whatever lewdneſs may be concerted, whatever luxu- " ry, immodeſty, or extravagance may be committed " in word or deed, no one's reputation is at ſtake, no " one's character is reſponſible for it. A circum- " ſtance of ſuch terrible conſequence to virtue and " good manners, that if *maſquerades* ſhall ever be re- " vived (as we heartily hope they will not) all ſerious " Chriſtians within theſe two great and populous cities " will be nearly concerned to lay it to heart, and dili- " gently beſtir themſelves in cautioning their friends " and neighbours againſt ſuch fatal ſnares. Particu- " larly, all who have the government and education " of youth, ought to take the greateſt care to keep " them out of the way of this dangerous temptation, " and then to labour againſt the ſpreading of it.

" I cannot forbear to add, that, all religious conſi- " derations apart, this is a diverſion that no true *Eng- " liſhman* ought to be fond of, when he remembers " that it was brought in among us by the ambaſſador " of a neighbouring nation in the laſt reign, while his " maſter was in meaſures to enſlave us: and indeed,

" there is not a more effectual way to enslave a people, " than first to dispirit and enfeeble them by licen- " tiousness and effeminacy." Thus far the right reverend author, whose zeal for the suppression of all these tempting machineries, has been so conspicuous and honourable.

3. The third place of dangerous resort, is the *gaming-table*. Many young gentlemen have been there bubbled and cheated of large sums of money, which were given them by their parents to support them honourably in their stations. In such sort of shops, young ladies are tempted to squander away too large a share of their yearly allowance, if not of the provision which their parents have made for their whole lives. It is a fatal snare to both sexes: if they win, they are allured still onward, while, according to their language, *luck runs on their side*: if they lose, they are tempted to another and another cast of the die, and enticed on still to fresh games by a delusive hope, that *fortune will turn*, and they shall recover all that they have lost. In the midst of these scenes their passions rise shamefully, a greedy desire of gain makes them warm and eager, and new losses plunge them sometimes into vexation and fury, till the soul is quite beaten off from its guard, and virtue and reason have no manner of command over them.

My worthy friend Mr. *Neal*, in his reformation-sermon, has taken occasion not only to inform us, that " merchants and tradesmen mix themselves at these " tables with men of desperate fortunes, and throw the " dice for their estates:" but in a very decent and soft manner of address has inquired, " Whether public " gaming in virtuous ladies is not a little out of cha- " racter? Whether it does not draw them into mixed " company, and give them an air of boldness, which " is perfectly inconsistent with that modesty, which is " the ornament of the fair sex? Whether it does not " engage them in an habit of idleness, and of keeping " ill hours? Whether their passions are not sometimes " disordered? And whether the losses they sustain,

" have not a tendency to breed ill blood in their fa-
" milies, and between their neareſt relations? It has
" been often obſerved, that gaming in a lady has uſu-
" ally been attended with the loſs of reputation, and
" ſometimes of that which is ſtill more valuable, her
" virtue and honour." Thus far proceeds this uſeful ſermon.

Now if theſe be the diſmal and frequent conſequences of the *gaming-table*, the loſs of a little money is one of the leaſt injuries you ſuſtain by it. But what if you ſhould ſtill come off gainers? Is this the way that God has taught or allowed us to procure the neceſſary comforts of life? Is this a ſort of labour or traffic on which you can aſk the bleſſing of heaven? Can you lift up your face to God, and pray, that he would ſucceed the caſt of the die, the drawing of the lot, or the dealing out of the cards, ſo as to increaſe your gain, while it is the very ſenſe and language of the prayer, that your neighbour may ſuſtain ſo much loſs? This is a ſad and guilty circumſtance which belongs to gaming, that one can gain nothing but what another loſes; and conſequently, we cannot aſk a *bleſſing* upon ourſelves, but at the ſame time we pray for a *blaſt* upon our neighbour.

Will you hope to excuſe it by ſaying, that my neighbour conſents to this blaſt, or this loſs, by entering into the game, and there is no injury where there is conſent?

I *anſwer*, that though he conſents to loſe *conditionally*, and upon a venturous hope of gain, yet he is not willing to ſuſtain the loſs *abſolutely*; but when either chance, or his neighbour's ſkill in the game has determined againſt him, then he is conſtrained to loſe, and does it unwillingly; ſo that he ſtill ſuſtains it as a loſs, or misfortune, or evil. Now if you aſk a bleſſing from heaven on this way of your getting money, you aſk rather *abſolutely* that your neighbour may ſuſtain a loſs, without any regard to the *condition* of his hope of gain. Your wiſh and prayer is directly that you may get, and he may loſe: you cannot wiſh this good to your-

ſelf, but you wiſh the contrary evil to him: and therefore I think gaming for gain cannot be conſiſtent with the laws of *Chriſt*, which certainly forbid us to wiſh evil to our neighbour.

And if you cannot ſo much as in thought aſk God's bleſſing on this, as you certainly may on ſuch recreations as have an evident tendency innocently to exerciſe the body and relax the mind, it ſeems your conſcience ſecretly condemns it, and there is an additional proof of its being evil to *you*.

All the juſteſt writers of morality, and the beſt caſuiſts, have generally, if not univerſally, determined againſt theſe methods of gain. Whatſoever game may be indulged as lawful, it is ſtill as a recreation, and not as a calling or buſineſs of life: and therefore no larger ſums ought to be riſked or ventured in this manner, than what may be lawfully laid out by any perſons for their preſent recreation, according to their different circumſtances in the world.

Beſides all this, think of the loſs of time, and the waſte of life that is continually made by ſome who frequent theſe gaming-places. Think how it calls away many a youth from their proper buſineſs, and tempts them to throw away what is not their own, and to riſk the ſubſtance, as well as the diſpleaſure of their parents, or of their maſter, at all the uncertain hazards of a dice-box. Read the pages which Mr. *Neal* has employed on this theme, in the ſermon juſt now cited: read what Mr. *Dorrington* has written ſeveral years ago on this ſubject of *gaming*: I wiſh ſuch diſcourſes were freſh in print, and put into the hands of every one who lies under this temptation.

4. The *midnight-aſſemblies* are the laſt which I ſhall mention of thoſe modiſh and hazardous diverſions, wherein youth are drawn away to much vanity, and plunged into the ſenſual gaieties of life; and that at thoſe hours, part of which ſhould be devoted to the religion of the family, or the cloſet, and partly to the nightly repoſe of nature. It is acknowledged to be proper and needful, that young people ſhould be in-

dulged in ſome recreations, agreeable to their age, and ſuitable to the condition in which Providence has placed them. But I would aſk whether the great and only valuable end of recreation is to be expected from theſe midnight-aſſemblies, namely, *to relieve us from the fatigues of life, and to exhilarate the ſpirits, ſo as thereby to fit us for the duties of life and religion?* Now are theſe the proper means to fit us for the duties of either kind? Perhaps it will be ſaid, that *dancing*, which is practiſed in thoſe aſſemblies, is an exerciſe conducive to health, and therefore a means of fitting us for the *duties of life*. But may not the unſeaſonableneſs of the midnight-hour prevent and over-balance the benefit, that might otherwiſe be ſuppoſed to ariſe from the exerciſe? Is it likely that natural health ſhould be promoted, or preſerved, by changing the ſeaſons and order of nature, and by allotting thoſe hours to *exerciſe*, which God and nature have ordained to *reſt?* Is the returning home after five or ſix hours dancing, through the cold and damp of the midnight-air, a proper means of preſerving health? or rather, is it not more likely to impair and deſtroy it? Have not theſe fatal effects been too often felt? Have there not been ſacrifices of human life offered to this midnight-idol? Have there been no fair young martyrs to this unſeaſonable folly? Are there not ſome of its ſlaves who are become feeble, labouring under ſore diſeaſes, and ſome of them fallen aſleep in death? Have not their muſic and their dancing, inſtead of natural reſt in their beds, brought them down to a long ſilence in the grave, and an untimely reſt in a bed of duſt? Thoſe amiable pieces of human nature, who were lately the joy and hope of their too indulgent parents, are now the bitterneſs of their hearts; and thoſe very exerciſes from whence they hoped the continuance of their joy, as the ſuppoſed means of confirming their childrens health, are become an everlaſtlaſting ſpring of their mourning.

And as thoſe midnight-recreations are *badly* ſuited to fit us for the duties of the civil life, ſo they are *worſe* ſuited to fit us for, or rather, they are more ap-

parently oppoſite to, the duties of religion. The religion of the cloſet is neglected, the beautiful regularity and order of the family is broken; and when the night has been turned into day, a good part of the next day is turned into night, while the duties of the morning, both to *God* and *man*, are unperformed. Thoſe who have frequented theſe aſſemblies know all this, and are my witneſſes to the truth of it. Nay, the very practice itſelf, at thoſe unſeaſonable hours, tells all the world how much they prefer theſe dangerous amuſements to the worſhip of God in the evening, and in the morning, and to all the conveniencies and decorum of family-government. Beſides, if I ſpeak to *Chriſtians*, have you not found that the indulgence to this ſort of diverſions, which are uſually practiſed in thoſe unſeaſonable aſſemblies, leads the mind away inſenſibly from God and religion, gives a vanity to the ſpirit, and greatly abates the ſpiritual and heavenly temper which ſhould belong to Chriſtians? Hath it not taken away the ſavour of godlineſs and tincture of piety from ſome younger minds? And do elder Chriſtians never ſuffer by it? Let it be further conſidered, *what ſort of company you mingle with in thoſe midnight-aſſemblies*. Are they moſt frequented by the wiſe and pious, or by the more vain and vicious part of mankind? Do they tend to fill your mind with the moſt improving notions, and your ears and your lips with the moſt proper converſation? Do you that frequent them never find your piety in danger there? Does ſtrict religion and prayer reliſh ſo well with you after thoſe gaudy nights of mirth and folly? And do you then, when you join in thoſe aſſemblies, practiſe the commands of God, to *abſtain from all appearance of evil*, and to *ſhun the paths of temptation?* Can you pray for a bleſſing on your attendance on theſe *midnight-meetings?* Or can you hope to run into the midſt of thoſe ſparks and living coals, and yet not be burned, nor ſo much as have your garments ſinged? Are not parents very generally ſenſible, that there are dangerous ſnares to youth in thoſe gay diverſions? And therefore the

mother will herſelf go along with her young offspring, to take care of them, and to watch over them; and perhaps there is ſcarcely any place or time which more wants the watchful eye of a ſuperior. But here let me aſk, is this all the reaſon why the mother attends thoſe ſcenes of vanity? Has ſhe no reliſh for them herſelf? Has ſhe no gay humours of her own to be gratified, which ſhe diſguiſes and covers with the pretence of a parental ſollicitude for the virtue and honour of her offspring? Are there no mothers who freely lead their children into thoſe perilous places, where ſoul and body are in danger, and are really their *tempters*, under a colour of being their *guardians*?

You will plead, perhaps, that ſome of theſe things are proper for the improvement of young people in *good-breeding* and *politeneſs*: They muſt be brought into company, to ſee the world, and to learn how to behave with becoming decency. Well, ſuppoſe theſe aſſemblies to be academies of politeneſs, and that young people attend there upon lectures of good-breeding. Is there no other time ſo fit as midnight, to poliſh the youth of both ſexes, and to breed them well? May not an hour or two be appointed, at more proper ſeaſons, by ſelect companies, for mutual converſation and innocent delight? Can there be no genteel recreations enjoyed, no leſſons of behaviour taught by day-light? Can no method of improvement in good-breeding be contrived and appointed, which ſhall be more ſecure from temptations and inconveniencies? Are there none which are more harmleſs, more innocent, of better reputation among perſons of ſtrict piety, and which make leſs inroads on the duties of life, both ſolitary and ſocial, civil and religious?

Shall I inquire once more, what is done at many of thoſe midnight-aſſemblies, before the dance is begun, or when it is ended, and what is the entertainment of thoſe who are not engaged in dancing? Are they not active in *gaming*? Are not *cards* the buſineſs of the hour? Are not children educated, by this means, in the love of gaming? And do they not hereby get ſuch

a reliſh of it, as proves afterwards pernicious to them? Now if gaming be not a practice fit to be encouraged, what encouragement do thoſe aſſemblies deſerve, where gaming is one of the chief diverſions or buſineſs?

But it is time to put an end to this ſort of diſcourſe. I beg pardon of my readers for having drawn it out to ſo great a length: for I have ſaid too much on this ſubject, for thoſe who have no inclination to theſe criminal and dangerous diverſions: and I wiſh I may have ſaid enough to do good to thoſe who have.

Upon the whole, I conclude, it is the duty of parents who would give their children a *good education*, to ſee to it that children, in their younger years, do not indulge ſuch recreations as may ſpoil all the good effects of the pious inſtructions, the prayers, and care of their parents. Otherwiſe, if you encourage them in ſuch recreations, you are building up thoſe vanities of mind, and thoſe vicious inclinations with one hand, which you labour to prevent or to deſtroy with the other.

SECT. X.

Of the proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of a Son, illuſtrated by Example.

SO weak and unhappy is human nature, that it is ever ready to run into extremes; and when we would recover ourſelves from an exceſs on the right hand, we know not where to ſtop till we are got to an exceſs on the left. Inſtances of this kind are innumerable in all the affairs of human life; but it is hardly more remarkable in any thing, than in the ſtrict and ſevere education of our fathers a century ago, and in the moſt profuſe and unlimited liberty that is indulged to children in our age.

In thoſe days, the ſons were bred up to learning by terrible diſcipline: every *Greek* and *Latin* author they converſed with, was attended with one or many new ſcourges, to drive them into acquaintance with him;

and not the leaſt miſdemeanor in life could eſcape the laſh: as though the father would prove his daily *love to his ſon* by never *ſparing his rod*, Prov. xiii. 24. Now-a-days young maſter muſt be treated with a fooliſh fondneſs, till he is grown to the ſize of man; and let his faults be ever ſo heinous, and his obſtinacy ever ſo great, yet the preceptor muſt not let him hear the name of the rod, leſt the child ſhould be frighted or hurt; the advice of the wiſeſt of men is utterly forgotten, when he tells us, that due *correction ſhall drive out the folly that is bound up in the heart of a child*, Prov. xxii. 15. Or elſe they boldly reverſe his divine counſel, *Prov.* xiii. 24. as though they would make the rule of their practice a direct contradiction to the words of *Solomon*, namely, *He that ſpareth the rod* loveth *his ſon*, *but he that* hateth *him chaſteneth him betimes*.

In that day, many children were kept in a moſt ſervile ſubjection, and not ſuffered to ſit down, or to ſpeak, in the preſence of their father, till they were come to the age of one-and-twenty. The leaſt degree of freedom was eſteemed a bold preſumption, and incurred a ſharp reproof. Now they are made familiar companions to their parents, almoſt from the very nurſery; and therefore they will hardly bear a check or rebuke at their hand.

In the beginning of the laſt century, and ſo onward to the middle of it, the children were uſually obliged to believe what their parents and their maſters taught them, whether they were principles of ſcience, or articles of faith and practice: they were tied down almoſt to every punctilio, as though it were neceſſary to ſalvation; they were not ſuffered to examine or inquire whether their teachers were in the right, and ſcarcely knew upon what grounds they were to aſſent to the things that were taught them; for it was a maxim of all teachers, that the learner muſt believe: *Diſcentem oportet credere*. Then an *ipſe dixit*, or *Ariſtotle* ſaid ſo, was a ſufficient proof of any propoſition in the colleges; and for a man of five-and-twenty to be a Chriſtian and a Proteſtant, a Diſſenter or a Church-

man, it was almoſt reaſon enough to ſay, that his father was ſo. But in this century, when the doctrine of a juſt and reaſonable liberty is better known, too many of the preſent youth break all the bonds of nature and duty, and run to the wildeſt degrees of looſeneſs, both in belief and practice. They ſlight the religion which their parents have taught them, that they may appear to have choſen a religion for themſelves: and when they have made a creed or belief of their own, or rather borrowed ſome ſcraps of infidelity from their vain companions and equals, they find pretences enough to caſt off all other creeds at once, as well as the counſels and cuſtoms of their religious predeceſſors.

"The practices of our fathers (ſay they) were preciſe and fooliſh, and ſhall be no rule for our conduct; the articles of their faith were abſurd and myſterious, but we will believe nothing of myſtery, leſt our faith ſhould be as ridiculous as theirs." In their younger years, and before their reaſon is half grown, they pretend to examine the ſublimeſt doctrines of Chriſtianity; and a raw and half-witted boy ſhall commence an Infidel, becauſe he cannot comprehend ſome of the glorious truths of the goſpel; and laughs at his elders and his anceſtors, for believing what they could not comprehend.

The child now-a-days forgets that his parent is obliged, by all the laws of God and nature, to train him up in his own religion, till he is come to the proper age of diſcretion to judge for himſelf; he forgets, or he will not know, that the parent is intruſted with the care of the ſouls of his young offspring by the very laws of nature, as well as by the revealed covenants of innocency and of grace. The ſon now-a-days forgets the obligations he is under to honour and obey the perſons that gave him birth; he pays no regard to the doctrines which led on his anceſtors to the love of God and man; whereas doctrines that have ſuch influence, claim at leaſt ſome degrees of attention, and eſpecially from a ſon who has been trained up in them,

and beheld the effect of them in the piety of his parents; nor will the very light of nature suffer him to depart from them, but upon the cleareſt judgment of his own mature reaſon, a thorough and impartial ſearch into the ſubject, the loud inward dictates of his conſcience, and the full evidence of his parents miſtake.

So wanton and licentious a ſpirit has poſſeſſed ſome of the youth of the nation, that they never think they have freed themſelves from the prejudices of their education, till they have thrown off almoſt all the yokes of reſtraint that were laid upon them by God or man. Some take a petulant pride in laying aſide the holy ſcriptures, for the ſame reaſon that *Timothy* was adviſed to *continue in them*; and that is, becauſe *they have learned and known them from their very childhood*, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And ſome, perhaps, have been laughed out of their Chriſtianity, leſt it ſhould be ſaid, their mothers and their nurſes had made them Chriſtians.

Heretofore the ſons were ſcarcely ſuffered to be abſent from home an hour, without expreſs leave, till they were arrived at the age of man, nor daughters till they were married; now both ſexes take an unbounded licence of roving where they pleaſe, and from a dozen years old, they forget to aſk leave to wander or to viſit where their fancies lead them: at firſt the parent gives a looſe and winks at it, and then the child claims it as his due for ever.

In ſhort, the laſt age taught mankind to believe that they were mere children, and treated them as ſuch, till they were near thirty years old; but the preſent gives them leave to fancy themſelves complete men and women at twelve or fifteen; and they accordingly judge and manage for themſelves entirely, and too often deſpiſe all advice of their elders.

Now, though it be ſufficiently evident that both theſe are extremes of liberty or reſtraint, yet if we judge by the reaſon of things, or by experience and ſucceſs, ſurely the ancient education is to be preferred before the preſent, and of the two ſhould rather be choſen.

If we would determine this by reaſon, it is eaſy to ſee that a father of fifty or ſixty years old, is fitter to judge for his ſon at four-and-twenty, in many matters of importance, than a boy of fifteen is to judge for himſelf.

Or, if we would decide the matter by experience, it is plain enough that the poſterity of the *former* generation (who are the fathers and the grandfathers of the *preſent*) had more of ſerious religion and true virtue amongſt them, than there is any hope or proſpect of among the greateſt part of their children and grandchildren. And if I would uſe a bold metaphor, I might venture to ſay with truth, the *laſt* century has brought forth more ſolid fruits of goodneſs, than the *preſent* can yet ſhow in bloſſoms; and in my opinion, this is much owing to the neglect of the pruning-knife.

But after all, is there no medium between theſe two extremes, exceſs of confinement, and exceſs of liberty? May not young underſtandings be allowed to ſhoot and ſpread themſelves a little, without growing rank and rampant? May not children be kept in a due and gentle ſubjection to their parents, without putting yokes of bondage on them? Is there no reaſonable reſtraint of the wild opinions and violent inclinations of youth, without making chains for the underſtanding, and throwing fetters on the ſoul? May not the young gentleman begin to act like a man, without forgetting that he is a ſon? and maintain the full liberty of his own judgment, without inſolence and contempt of the opinions of his elders? May not he who is bred up a Proteſtant and a Chriſtian, judge freely for himſelf, without the prejudices of his education, and yet continue a Chriſtian and a Proteſtant ſtill? Is it not poſſible for the parent to indulge, and the child to enjoy, a juſt liberty, and yet neither encourage nor practiſe a wild licentiouſneſs?

Yes, ſurely; and there have been happy inſtances in the laſt age, and there are ſome in this, both of parents and children, that have learned to tread this middle

path, and found wiſdom and virtue in it, piety and peace. *Agathus* has bred his ſon up under ſuch diſcipline, as renders them both proper examples to the world.

Eugenio is juſt out of his minority, and in the twenty-ſecond year of his age he practiſes the man with all that virtue and decency, which makes his father's acquaintance covet his company; and indeed they may learn by his diſcourſe the art of good reaſoning, as well as the precepts of piety from his example. He is an entertaining companion to the gay young gentlemen his equals; and yet divines and philoſophers take a pleaſure to have *Eugenio* amongſt them. He is careſſed by his ſuperiors in honour and years; and though he is releaſed from the diſcipline of parental education, yet he treats the lady his mother with all that affectionate duty that could be deſired or demanded of him ten years ago: his father is content to ſee his own youth outſhined by his ſon, and confeſſes, that *Eugenio* already promiſes greater things than *Agathus* did at thirty.

If you aſk whence theſe happy qualities ariſe, I grant there was ſome foundation for them in the very make of his nature; there was ſomething of a complexional virtue mingled with his frame; but it is much more owing to the wiſe conduct of his parents from his very infancy, and the bleſſing of divine grace attending their labours, their prayers, and their hopes.

He was trained up from the very cradle to all the duties of infant-virtue, by the allurements of love and remark, ſuited to his age; and never was driven to practiſe any thing by a frown or a haſty word, where it was poſſible for kinder affections to work the ſame effect by indulgence and delay.

As faſt as his reaſoning powers began to appear and exert themſelves, they were conducted in an eaſy track of thought, to find out and obſerve the reaſonableneſs of every part of his duty, and the lovely character of a child obedient to reaſon and to his parents will; while every departure from duty was ſhewn to be ſo contrary

to reason, as laid an early foundation for conscience to work upon: conscience began here to assume its office, and to manifest its authority in dictates, and reproofs, and reflections of mind, peaceful or painful, according to his behaviour. When his parents observed this inward monitor to awake in his soul, they could better trust him out of their sight.

When he became capable of conceiving of an almighty and invisible Being, who made this world and every creature in it, he was taught to pay all due regard to this God his Maker; and from the authority and love of his father on earth, he was led to form right ideas (as far as childhood permitted) of the power, government, and goodness of the universal and supreme Father of all in heaven.

He was informed why punishment was due to an offence against God or his parents, that his fear might become a useful passion to awaken and guard his virtue; but he was instructed, at the same time, that where he heartily repented of a fault, and returned to his duty with new diligence, there was forgiveness to be obtained both of God and man.

When at any time a friend interceded for him to his father, after he had been guilty of a fault, he was hereby directed into the doctrine of *Jesus the Mediator* between God and man; and thus he knew him as an *intercessor*, before he could well understand the notion of his *sacrifice* and *atonement*.

In his younger years he passed but twice under the correction of the rod; *once* for a fit of obstinacy and persisting in a falsehood; then he was given up to severe chastisement, and it dispelled and cured the sullen humour for ever; and *once* for the contempt of his mother's authority he endured the scourge again, and he wanted it no more.

He was enticed sometimes to the love of letters, by making his lesson a reward of some domestic duty; and a permission to pursue some parts of learning, was the appointed recompence of his diligence and improvement in others.

There was nothing required of his memory but what was firſt (as far as poſſible) let into his underſtanding: and by proper images and repreſentations, ſuited to his years, he was taught to form ſome conception of the things deſcribed, before he was bid to learn the words by heart. Thus he was freed from the danger of treaſuring up the cant and jargon of mere names, inſtead of the riches of ſolid knowledge.

Where any abſtruſe and difficult notions occurred in his courſe of learning, his preceptor poſtponed them till he had gone through that ſubject in a more ſuperficial way; for this purpoſe he paſſed twice through all the ſciences: and to make the doctrines of Chriſtianity eaſy to him in his childhood, he had two or three catechiſms compoſed by his tutor, each of them ſuited to his more early or more improved capacity, till at twelve years old he was thought fit to learn that public form, which is more univerſally taught and approved.

As he was inured to reaſoning from his childhood, ſo he was inſtructed to prove every thing, according to the nature of the ſubject, by natural or moral arguments, as far as his years would admit: and thus he drew much of his early knowledge from reaſon, or from revelation, by the force of his judgment, and not merely from his teachers by the ſtrength of his memory.

His parents were perſuaded indeed that they ought to teach him the principles of virtue while he was a child; and the moſt important truths of religion, both natural and revealed, before he was capable of deriving them from the fund of his own reaſon; or of framing a religion for himſelf out of ſo large a book as the Bible. They thought themſelves under the obligation of that divine command, *Train up a child in the way, that he ſhould go, and when he is old he will not depart from it*, Prov. xxii. 6. And therefore *from a child they made him acquainted with the holy ſcriptures*, and perſuaded him to believe that they were *given by the inſpiration of God*, before it was poſſible for him to take in

the arguments from reason, history, tradition, &c. which must be joined together to confirm the sacred canon, and prove the several books of the Bible to be divine. Thus, like *Timothy*, he *continued in the things which he had learned, and had been assured of, knowing of whom he had learned them*, 2 Tim. iii. 14, 15, 16. Yet as his years advanced, they thought it requisite to show him the solid and rational foundations of his faith, that his hope might be built upon the authority of God, and not of men.

Thus the apostles and prophets were made his early companions: and being instructed in the proofs of the Christian religion, and the divine original of his Bible, he pays a more constant and sacred regard to it, since his judgment and reason assure him that it is the word of God, than when he was a child, and believed it because his mother told him so. He reads the scriptures daily now, not like the lessons of his infancy, but as the infallible rule of his faith and practice: he searches them every day in his closet, not to confirm any articles and doctrines that he is resolved to believe, but (as the noble *Bereans* did) to examine and try whether those doctrines and articles ought to be believed or no, which he was taught in the nursery.

After he arrived at fifteen he was suffered to admit nothing into his full assent, till his mind saw the rational evidence of the proposition itself; or at least till he felt the power of those reasons which obliged him to assent upon moral evidence and testimony, where the evidences of sense or of reason were not to be expected. He knew that he was not to hope for mathematical proofs that there is a pope at *Rome*, that the *Turks* have dominion over *Judea*, that St. *Paul* wrote an epistle to the *Romans*, that *Christ* was crucified without the gates of *Jerusalem*, and that in three days time he rose from the dead; and yet that there is just and reasonable evidence to enforce and support the belief of all these. Where truths were too sublime for present comprehension, he would never admit them a

a part of his faith, till he saw full evidence of a speaking God, and a divine revelation.

His tutor never imposed any thing on him with a magisterial air, but by way of advice recommended to him such studies and such methods of improvement, as his experience had long approved; he gave frequent hints of the danger of some opinions, and the fatal consequences of some modish and mistaken principles. He let him know generally what sentiments he himself embraced among the divided opinions of the age: and what clear and comprehensive knowledge, what satisfaction of judgment, serenity of mind, and peace of conscience, were to be found in the principles which he had chosen; but he exhorted his pupil still to choose wisely for himself, and led him onward in the sciences, and in common and sacred affairs, to frame his own sentiments by just rules of reasoning: though *Eugenio* did not superstitiously confine his belief to the opinions of his instructor, yet he could not but love the man that indulged him in such a liberty of thought, and gave him such an admirable clue, by which he let himself into the secrets of knowledge, human and divine: thus under the happy and insensible influences of so prudent a supervisor, he traced the paths of learning, and enjoyed the unspeakable pleasure of being his own teacher, and of framing his opinions himself. By this means he began early to use his reason with freedom, and to judge for himself, without a servile submission to the authority of others; and yet to pay a just and solemn deference to persons of age and experience, and particularly to those who were the proper and appointed guides of his youth, and who led him on so gently in the paths of knowledge.

He loves to call himself by the honourable name of a *Christian*: and though his particular sentiments approach much nearer to the opinions of some parties than to others, yet he likes not to be called by the name of any party, for he is wise and bold enough to be a bigot to none. He practises a noble and an extensive charity to those that, in lesser matters, differ

widely from him, if they do but maintain the moſt eſſential and neceſſary parts of Chriſtianity; nor does he ſeclude them from his communion, nor withhold himſelf from theirs; but as the providence of God gives him juſt occaſions, he eats and drinks with them at the table of their common Lord, provided always that they impoſe nothing upon his practice contrary to his conſcience.

Yet his charity has its limits too: for he hardly knows how to worſhip the Son of God in the moſt ſolemn ordinance of communion, with thoſe that eſteem him but a mere man; nor can he join with an aſſembly of profeſſed *Socinians* to commemorate the death of *Chriſt*, who deny it to be a proper atonement for the ſins of men.

He dares to believe the doctrines of original ſin, the ſatisfaction of *Chriſt*, the influences of the bleſſed Spirit, and other deſpiſed truths of the goſpel; and this not becauſe his anceſtors believed them, but becauſe he cannot avoid the evidence of them in ſcripture. And if in ſome few points of leſs importance he takes leave to differ from the ſentiments of his elders, it is with ſuch a becoming modeſty, that convinces his father how unwilling he is to diſſent from him; and yet he maintains his opinion with ſuch an appearance of argument, and ſuch an honeſt concern for truth and piety, that makes it plain to his friends, that he is under the ſtrong conſtraint of an inward conviction. Thus, though he has perhaps ſome new apprehenſions of things, yet he is by no means led into them by a licentious humour of oppoſing his teachers, nor a wanton pride of free-thinking.

He was not kept a ſtranger to the errors and follies of mankind, nor was he let looſe amongſt them, either in books or in company, without a guard and a guide. His preceptor let him know the groſs miſtakes and iniquities of men, ancient and modern, but inlaid him with proper principles of truth and virtue, and furniſhed him with ſuch rules of judgment, as led him more eaſily to diſtinguiſh between good and bad; and thus

he was secured against the infection and the poison, both of the living and the dead.

He had early cautions given him to avoid the bantering tribe of mortals, and was instructed to distinguish a jest from an argument, so that a loud laugh at his religion, never puts him nor his faith out of countenance. He is ever ready to render a reason of his Christian hope, and to defend his creed; but he scorns to enter the lists with such a disputant that has no artillery but squib and flash, no arguments besides grimace and ridicule. Thus he supports the character of a Christian with honour; he confines his faith to his Bible, and his practice to all the rules of piety; and yet thinks as freely as that vain herd of Atheists and Deists who arrogate the name of *Free-thinkers* to themselves.

You will inquire, perhaps, how he came to attain so manly a conduct in life at so early an age, and how every thing of the *boy* was worn off so soon. Truly, besides other influences, it is much owing to the happy management of *Eraste* (that was the name of the lady his mother), she was frequent in the nursery, and inspired sentiments into his childhood becoming riper years. When there was company in the parlour, with whom she could use such a freedom, she brought her son in among them, not to entertain them with his own noise, and tattle, and impertinence, but to hear their discourse, and sometimes to answer a little question or two they might ask him. When he was grown up to a youth, he was often admitted into the room with his father's acquaintance, and was indulged the liberty to ask and inquire on subjects that seemed to be above his years: he was encouraged to speak a sentence or two of his own thoughts, and thus to learn and practise a modest assurance. But when the company was gone, he was approved and praised if he behaved well, or received kind hints of admonition that he might know when he had been too silent, and when too forward to speak. Thus by enjoying the advantage of society above the level of his own age

and understanding, he was always aspiring to imitation; and the excesses and defects of his conduct were daily noticed and cured.

His curiosity was gratified abroad with new sights and scenes, as often as his parents could do it with convenience, that he might not stare and wonder at every strange object or occurrence; but he was made patient of restraint and disappointment, when he seemed to indulge an excessive desire of any needless diversion. If he sought any criminal pleasures, or diversions attended with great danger and inconvenience, the pursuit of them was absolutely forbidden; but it was done in so kind a manner, as made the guilt or peril of them appear in the strongest light, and thereby they were rendered hateful or formidable, rather than the objects of wish or desire.

When *Eugenio* first began to go abroad in the world, his companions were recommended to him by the prudence of his parents; or if he chose them himself, it was still within the reach of his tutor's observation, or the notice of his father's eye: nor was he suffered to run loose into promiscuous company, till it appeared that his mind was furnished with steady principles of virtue; till he had knowledge enough to defend those principles, and to repel the assaults that might be made upon his faith. And for this reason, till he was twenty years old, he gave account to his superiors how he spent the day, whensoever he was absent from them; though they did not at that age require that he should ask formal leave for a few hours excursion.

Yet it was hardly thought fit to trust him to his own conduct for whole days together, lest he should meet with temptations too hard for his virtue, till he had gained resolution enough to say NO boldly, and to maintain an obstinate refusal of pernicious pleasures. He was told before-hand how the profane and the lewd would use all the arts of address, and how subtilly they would practise upon his good humour with powerful and tempting importunities. This set him ever upon his guard, and though he carried his sweet-

neſs of temper always about with him, yet he learned to conceal it whereſoever it was neither proper nor ſafe to appear. By a little converſe in the world, he found that it was neceſſary to be poſitive, bold, and unmoveable in rejecting every propoſal which might endanger his character or his morals; eſpecially as he ſoon became ſenſible that a ſoft and cold denial gave courage to new attacks, and left him liable to be teaſed with freſh ſolicitations. He laid down this therefore for a conſtant rule, that where his reaſon had determined any practice to be either plainly ſinful, or utterly inexpedient, he would give ſo firm a denial, upon the principles of virtue and religion, as ſhould for ever diſcourage any further ſolicitations. This gave him the character of a man of reſolute virtue, even among the rakes of the time, nor was he ever eſteemed the leſs on this account. At firſt indeed he thought it a happy victory which he had gotten over himſelf, when he could defy the ſhame of the world, and reſolve to be a Chriſtian in the face of vice and infidelity: he found the ſhorteſt way to conquer this fooliſh ſhame, was to renounce it at once: then it was eaſy to practiſe ſingularity amidſt a profane multitude. And when he began to get courage enough to profeſs reſolute piety without a bluſh, in the midſt of ſuch company as this, *Agathus* and *Eraſte* then permitted their ſon to travel abroad, and to ſee more of the world, under the protection of their daily prayers. His firſt tour was through the neighbouring counties of *England*; he afterward enlarged the circuit of his travels, till he had viſited foreign nations, and learned the value of his own.

In ſhort, the reſtraints of his younger years were tempered with ſo much liberty, and managed with ſuch prudence and tenderneſs, and theſe bonds of diſcipline were ſo gradually looſened, as faſt as he grew wiſe enough to govern himſelf, that *Eugenio* always carried about with him an inward conviction of the great love and wiſdom of his parents and his tutor. The humours of the child now and then felt ſome reluctance

against the pious discipline of his elders: but now he is arrived at manhood, there is nothing that he looks back upon with greater satisfaction than the steps of their conduct, and the instances of his own submission. He often recounts these things with pleasure, as some of the chief favours of heaven, whereby he was guarded through all the dangers and follies of youth and childhood, and effectually kept, through divine grace operating by these happy means, from a thousand sorrows, and perhaps from everlasting ruin.

Though he has been released some years from the strictness of paternal government, yet he still makes his parents his chosen friends: and though they cease to practise authority upon him and absolute command, yet he pays the utmost deference to their counsels, and to the first notice of their inclinations. You shall never find him resisting and debating against their desires and propensities in little common things of life, which are indifferent in themselves; he thinks it carries in it too much contempt of those whom God and nature requires him to honour. In those instances of practice which they utterly forbid in their family, he bears so tender a regard to their peace, that he will scarcely ever allow himself in them, even when he cannot see sufficient reason to pronounce them unlawful. Nor does he pay this regard to his parents alone, but denies himself in some gratifications which he esteems innocent, out of regard to what he accounts the mistaken judgment of some pious persons with whom he converses and worships. They are *weak*, perhaps, in their austerities; but St. *Paul* has taught him, that *the strong ought to bear with the infirmities of the weak, and not to please themselves* to the *offence of the church of God*. This he observed to be the constant practice of *Agathus* and *Eraſti*, and he maintains a great regard to the examples of so much piety and goodness, even though his reason does not lead him always to embrace their opinions. Whensoever he enters into an important action of life, he takes a filial pleasure to seek advice from his worthy parents, and it is uneasy

to him to attempt any thing of moment without it. He does not indeed univerſally practiſe all their ſentiments, but he gains their conſent to follow his own reaſon and choice.

Some of the wild young gentlemen of the age may happen to laugh at him for being ſo much a boy ſtill, and for ſhewing ſuch ſubjection to the old folks, (as they call them): with a ſcornful ſmile they bid him "Break off his leading-ſtrings, and caſt away his yokes "of bondage." But for the moſt part he obſerves, that the ſame perſons ſhake off all yokes at once, and at once break the bonds of nature, duty, and religion: they pay but little regard to their ſuperior in heaven, any more than to thoſe on earth, and have forgotten God and their parents together. "Nor will I ever be "moved (ſays he) with the reproaches of thoſe who "make a jeſt of things ſacred as well as civil, and treat "their mother and their Maker with the ſame con-"tempt."

SECT. XI.

Of the Proper Degrees of Liberty and Reſtraint in the Education of Daughters, illuſtrated by Examples.

IT is neceſſary that youth ſhould be laid under ſome reſtraint. When our inclinations are violent, and our judgment weak, it was a wiſe proviſion of God our Creator, that we ſhould be under the conduct of thoſe who were born before us; and that we ſhould be bound to obey them, who have an innate ſolicitude for our happineſs, and are much fitter to judge for our advantage, than we ourſelves can be in that early part of life.

But it may be ſaid, liberty is ſo glorious a bleſſing, that ſurely it ought not utterly to be taken away from the young, leſt their ſpirits be cramped and enſlaved, and the growth of their ſouls ſo ſtinted by a narrow and ſevere reſtraint, that they act all their lives like children under age. Or ſometimes a too rigid con-

finement will have the contrary effect, and make the impatience of youth break out beyond all bounds, as ſoon as ever they get the firſt reliſh of freedom.

But O how exceedingly difficult it is to hit the middle way! How hard for parents to manage their own authority with ſo much gentleneſs, and to regulate the liberties of their children with ſo wiſe a diſcipline, as to fall into neither extreme, nor give unhappy occaſion for cenſure! though I have ſpoken my opinion freely, that it is ſafer to err on the ſide of reſtraint, than of exceſſive indulgence.

Antigone had an excellent mother, but ſhe died young: *Antigone*, with her elder ſiſter, from their very infancy, were placed under a grandmother's care. The good old gentlewoman trained them up preciſely in the forms in which ſhe herſelf was educated, when the modes of breeding had (it muſt be confeſſed) too much narrowneſs and auſterity. She gave them all the good inſtructions ſhe had received from her anceſtors, and would ſcarcely ever ſuffer them to be out of her ſight. She ſaw the eldeſt well married at five-and-twenty, and ſettled in a courſe of virtue and religion: ſhe found her zeal and pious care attended with ſucceſs in ſeveral of her poſterity, and ſhe departed this life in peace.

But unhappy *Antigone* took a different turn: ſhe was let looſe into the world with all her poſſeſſions and powers in her own hand; and falling into vain company, ſhe got ſuch a taſte of unbounded liberty and modiſh vices, that ſhe could never reflect upon the method of her own education without angry remarks or ridicule.

When ſhe came to have children of her own, ſhe ſtill retained the reſentment which ſhe had conceived at the conduct of her grandmother, and therefore ſhe reſolved that her daughters ſhould be bred up in the other extreme.

"In my younger times (ſaid ſhe) we were kept "hard to the labour of the needle, and ſpent ſix hours "a-day at it, as though I were to get my bread by "my fingers ends; but a little of that buſineſs ſhall

" ſerve theſe children, for their father has left them
" good fortunes of their own.

" We were not ſuffered to read any thing but the
" Bible and ſermon-books; but I ſhall teach mine po-
" liter leſſons out of plays and romances, that they
" may be acquainted with the world betimes.

" My eldeſt ſiſter was ſcarcely ever allowed to ſpeak
" in company till ſhe was married, and it was a the-
" ſome length of years before that day came. The
" old proverb ran thus, *That a maiden muſt be ſeen, and*
" *not heard:* but I hope my little daughters will not
" be dumb.

" We were always confined to dwell at home, un-
" leſs ſome extraordinary occaſion called us abroad,
" perhaps once in a month, or twice in a ſummer.
" We were taught to play the good houſewife in the
" kitchen and the paſtry, and were well inſtructed in
" the conduct of the broom and duſter; but we knew
" nothing of the mode of the court, and the diver-
" ſions of the town. I ſhould be aſhamed to ſee theſe
" young creatures that are under my care, ſo awk-
" ward in company at fourteen, as I was at four-and-
" twenty."

And thus *Antigone* brought up her young family of daughters agreeable to her own looſe notions; for ſhe had formed her ſentiments of education merely from the averſion ſhe had conceived to the way of her elders, and choſe the very reverſe of their conduct for her rule, becauſe their piety and wiſdom had a little alloy of rigour and ſtiffneſs attending it.

The young things, under their mother's eye, could manage the tea-table at ten years old, when they could hardly read a chapter in the New Teſtament. At fourteen they learned the airs of the world; they gad abroad at their pleaſure, and will hardly ſuffer *Antigone* to direct them or go with them; they deſpiſe the old woman betimes, for they can viſit without her attendance, and prattle abundantly without her prompting.

She led or ſent them to the playhouſe twice or thrice a-week, where a great part of their natural modeſty is worn off and forgotten: *modeſty, the guard of youthful virtue!* they can talk love-ſtories out of *Cleopatra*; they are well practiſed already in the arts of ſcandal, and for want of better furniture of mind, emptineſs and impertinence, ribands and faſhions, gay gentlemen and wanton ſongs, ever dwell upon their tongues. They have been taught ſo little to ſet a guard upon themſelves, that their virtue is much ſuſpected. But (be that as it will) they are ſeized and married before ſixteen, being tempted away to bind themſelves for life, to a laced coat and a faſhionable wig. Thus children ſet up at once to govern a family; but ſo ignorant in all thoſe concerns, that, from the garret to the kitchen, the whole houſe is entirely ruled by the humour of the ſervants, becauſe the young miſtreſs knows not how to inſtruct or correct them. There is neither religion nor prudence among them, at home or abroad. Thus they make haſte to ruin and miſery in this world, without thought or hope of the world to come, and the heaven or the hell that await us there.

Antigone ſees her own miſtake too late; and though ſhe has not ſo juſt a ſenſe and horror of their looſe and profane life as would become her years, yet ſhe is vexed to ſee herſelf neglected ſo ſoon, and ſcorned by her own children; but ſhe confeſſes, with a ſigh, that ſhe has led them the way, by laughing ſo often at her good old grandmother.

How much wiſer is *Phroniſſa* in the education that ſhe gives her daughters, who maintains a happy medium between the ſeverity of the laſt age, and the wild licence of this! She manages her conduct towards them with ſuch an admirable felicity, that though ſhe confines them within the ſacred limits of virtue and religion, yet they have not a wiſh beyond the liberties which they daily enjoy.

Phroniſſa, when her daughters were little children, uſed to ſpend ſome hours daily in the nurſery, and

taught the young creatures to recite many a pretty paſſage out of the Bible, before they were capable of reading it themſelves; yet at ſix years old they read the ſcriptures with eaſe, and then they rejoiced to find the ſame ſtories in *Geneſis* and in the *Goſpels* which their mother had taught them before. As their years advanced, they were admitted into the beſt converſation, and had ſuch books put into their hands, as might acquaint them with the rules of prudence and piety in an eaſy and familiar way: the reading the lives of eminent perſons who were examples of this kind, was one of the daily methods ſhe uſed, at once to inſtruct and entertain them. By ſuch means, and others which ſhe wiſely adapted to their advancing age, they had all the knowledge beſtowed upon them that could be ſuppoſed proper for women, and that might render their character honourable and uſeful in the world.

As for plays and romances, they were ever bred up in a juſt apprehenſion of the danger and miſchief of them: *Collier's View of the Stage* was early put into their cloſets, that they might learn there the hideous immorality and profaneneſs of the *Engliſh comedies*; and by the way, he forbids us to hope from our tragical poets a much ſafer entertainment. There they might read enough to forbid their attendances on the playhouſe, and ſee the poiſon expoſed, without danger of the infection. The ſervants that waited on them, and the books that were left within their reach, were ſuch as never corrupted their minds with impure words or images.

Long has *Phroniſſa* known that domeſtic virtues are the buſineſs and the honour of her ſex. Nature and hiſtory agree to aſſure her, that the conduct of the houſehold is committed to the women, and the precepts and examples of ſcripture confirm it. She educated her daughters therefore in conſtant acquaintance with all family affairs, and they knew betimes what belonged to the proviſions of the table, and the furniture of every room. Though her circumſtances were conſiderable in the world, yet, by her own example,

ſhe made her children know, that a frequent viſit to the kitchen was not beneath their ſtate, nor the common menial affairs too mean for their notice; that they might be able hereafter to manage their own houſe, and not be directed, impoſed upon, and perhaps ridiculed by their own ſervants.

They were initiated early in the ſcience of the needle, and were bred up ſkilful in all the plain and flowery arts of it; but it was never made a taſk nor a toil to them, nor did they waſte their hours in thoſe nice and tedious works, which coſt our female anceſtors ſeven years of their life, and ſtitches without number. To render this exerciſe pleaſant, one of them always entertained the company with ſome uſeful author, while the reſt were at work; every one had freedom and encouragement to ſtart what queſtion ſhe pleaſed, and to make any remarks on the preſent ſubject; that reading, working, and converſation, might fill up the hour with variety and delight. Thus while their hands were making garments for themſelves or for the poor, their minds were enriched with treaſures of human and divine knowledge.

At proper ſeaſons the young ladies were inſtructed in the gayer accompliſhments of their age: but they were taught to eſteem the ſong and the dance, ſome of their meaneſt talents, becauſe they are often forgotten in advanced years, and add but little to the virtue, the honour, or the happineſs of life.

Phroniſſa herſelf was ſprightly and active, and ſhe abhorred a ſlothful and lazy humour; therefore ſhe conſtantly found out ſome inviting and agreeable employment for her daughters, that they might hate idleneſs as a miſchievous vice, and be trained up to an active and uſeful life. Yet ſhe perpetually inſinuated the ſuperior delights of the cloſet, and tempted them by all divine methods to the love of devout retirement. Whenſoever ſhe ſeemed to diſtinguiſh them by any peculiar favour, it was generally upon ſome new indication of early piety, or ſome young practice of a ſelf-denying virtue.

They were taught to receive viſits in form, agreeable to the age; and though they knew the modes of dreſs ſufficiently to ſecure them from any thing awkward or unfaſhionable, yet their minds were ſo well furniſhed with richer variety, that they had no need to run to thoſe poor and trivial topics, to exclude ſilence and dulneſs from the drawing-room. They would not give ſuch an affront to the underſtandings of the ladies their viſitants, as to treat them with ſuch meanneſs and impertinence; therefore all this ſort of converſation was reſerved, almoſt entirely, for the minutes appointed to the milliner and the tire-woman.

Here I muſt publiſh it to their honour, to provoke the ſex to imitation, that though they comported with the faſhion in all their ornaments, ſo far as the faſhion was modeſt, and could approve itſelf to reaſon or religion, yet *Phroniſſa* would not ſuffer their younger judgments ſo far to be impoſed on by cuſtom, as that the mode ſhould be entirely the meaſure of all decency to them. She knew there is ſuch a thing as natural harmony and agreeableneſs; in the beauties of colour and figure her delicacy of taſte was exquiſite; and where the mode run counter to nature, though ſhe indulged her daughters to follow it in ſome innocent inſtances, becauſe ſhe loved not to be remarkably ſingular in things of indifference, yet ſhe took care always to teach them to diſtinguiſh gay folly and affected extravagance from natural decencies, both in furniture and in dreſs: Their rank in the world was eminent, but they never appeared the firſt, nor the higheſt in any new-fangled forms of attire. By her wiſe example and inſtructions ſhe had ſo formed their minds, as to be able to ſee garments more gaudy, and even more modiſh than their own, without envy or wiſhes. They could bear to find a trimming ſet on a little awry, or the plait of a garment ill-diſpoſed, without making the whole houſe and the day uneaſy, and the ſun and heavens ſmile upon them in vain.

Phroniſſa taught them the happy art of managing a viſit with ſome uſeful improvement of the hour, and

without offence. If a word of ſcandal occurred in company, it was ſoon diverted or ſuppreſſed. The children were charged to ſpeak well of their neighbours as far as truth would admit, and to be ſilent as to any thing further: but when the poor or the deformed were mentioned in diſcourſe, the aged, the lame, or the blind, thoſe objects were handled with the utmoſt tenderneſs: nothing could diſpleaſe *Phroniſſa* more than to hear a jeſt thrown upon natural infirmities: ſhe thought there was ſomething ſacred in miſery, and it was not to be touched with a rude hand. All reproach and ſatire of this kind was for ever baniſhed where ſhe came; and if ever raillery was indulged, vice and wilful folly were the conſtant ſubjects of it.

Perſons of diſtinguiſhed characters ſhe always diſtinguiſhed in her reſpect, and trained up her family to pay the ſame civilities. Whenſoever ſhe named her own parents it was with high veneration and love, and thereby ſhe naturally led her children to give due honour to all their ſuperior relatives.

Though it is the faſhion of the age to laugh at the prieſthood in all forms, and to teach every boy to ſcoff at a miniſter, *Phroniſſa* paid *double honours* to them *who laboured in the word and doctrine*, where their perſonal behaviour upheld the dignity of their office; for ſhe was perſuaded *Saint Paul* was a better director than the gay gentlemen of the mode, 1 *Tim.* v. 17. Beſides ſhe wiſely conſidered, that a contempt of their perſons would neceſſarily bring with it a contempt of all their miniſtrations; and then ſhe might carry her daughters to the church as much as ſhe pleaſed, but preaching and praying, and all ſacred things, would grow deſpicable and uſeleſs when they had firſt learned to make a jeſt of the preacher.

But are theſe young ladies always confined at home? Are they never ſuffered to ſee the world? Yes, and ſometimes without the guard of a mother too; though *Phroniſſa* is ſo well beloved by her children, that they would very ſeldom chooſe to go without her.

Their ſouls are inlaid betimes with the principles of virtue and prudence; theſe are their conſtant guard; nor do they ever wiſh to make a viſit where their mother has reaſon to ſuſpect their ſafety.

They have freedom given them in all the common affairs of life to chooſe for themſelves, but they take pleaſure, for the moſt part, in referring the choice back again to their elders. *Phroniſſa* has managed the reſtraint of their younger years with ſo much reaſon and love, that they have ſeemed all their lives to know nothing but liberty; an admonition of their parents meets with cheerful compliance, and is never debated. A wiſh or deſire has the ſame power over them now, as a command had in their infancy and childhood; for the command was ever dreſſed in the ſofteſt language of authority, and this made every act of obedience a delight, till it became an habitual pleaſure.

In ſhort, they have been educated with ſuch diſcretion, tenderneſs, and piety, as have laid a foundation to make them happy and uſeful in the riſing age: their parents with pleaſure view the growing proſpect, and return daily thanks to Almighty God, whoſe bleſſing has attended their watchful cares, and has thus far anſwered their moſt fervent devotions.

REMNANTS OF TIME,

EMPLOYED IN

PROSE AND VERSE:

OR,

Short Eſſays and Compoſures

ON

VARIOUS SUBJECTS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

Dr. Watts's *opinion about publiſhing theſe papers, appears in the following* Advertiſement, *prefixed to them by himſelf.*

THESE papers were written at ſeveral ſeaſons and intervals of leiſure, and on various occaſions ariſing through the greateſt part of my life. Many of them were deſigned to be publiſhed among the *Reliquiæ Juveniles*, but for ſome reaſon or other, not worth preſent notice, were laid by at that time. Whether I ſhall ever publiſh them I know not, though far the greateſt part of them have long ſtood corrected among my manuſcripts; nor do I ſuppoſe many of them inferior to thoſe Eſſays and Remarks of this kind, which have before appeared in the world with ſome acceptance. If they are not publiſhed in my life-time, my worthy friends, who have the care of my papers, may leave out what they pleaſe.

I. W.

July 3, 1740.

REMNANTS OF TIME,

EMPLOYED IN

PROSE AND VERSE, &c.

I. *Juſtice* and *Grace.*

NEVER was there any hour ſince the creation of all things, nor ever will be till the laſt conflagration, wherein the holy God, ſo remarkably diſplayed his juſtice and his grace, as that hour, that ſaw our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* hanging upon the croſs, forſaken of his Father, and expiring. What a dreadful glory was given to vindictive juſtice, when the great and terrible God made the ſoul of his own Son a painful ſacrifice for ſin! What an amazing inſtance of grace, that he ſhould redeem ſuch worthleſs ſinners as we are from the vengeance, by expoſing his beloved Son to it! When I view the ſeverity or the compaſſion of that hour, my thoughts are loſt in aſtoniſhment: it is not for me, it is not for *Paul* or *Apollos*, it is not for the tongue of men or angels to ſay which was greateſt, the compaſſion or the ſeverity. Humble adoration becomes us beſt, and a thankful acceptance of the pardon that was purchaſed at ſo dear a rate.

Next to this I know not a more eminent diſplay of terror and mercy, than the dying hour of a pious but deſponding Chriſtian, under the tumultuous and diſquieting temptations of the devil.

See within thoſe curtains a perſon of faith and ſerious piety, but of a melancholy conſtitution, and expecting death. While his fleſh is tortured with ſharp agonies and terribly convulſed, a ghaſtly horror ſits on his countenance, and he groans under extreme anguiſh. Behold the man, a favourite of heaven, a child of light, aſſaulted with the darts of hell, and his ſoul ſurrounded with thick darkneſs; all his ſins ſtand in dreadful array before him, and threaten him with the execution of all the curſes in the Bible. Though he loves God with all his heart, he is in the dark, he knows it not, nor can he believe that God has any love for him; and though he cannot utterly let go his hold of his Saviour and the goſpel, yet in his own apprehenſion he is abandoned both of the Father and the Son. In every new pang that he feels, his own fears perſuade him that the gates of hell are now opening upon him: he hangs hovering over the burning pit, and at the laſt gaſp of life, when he ſeems to be ſinking into eternal death, he quits the body with all its ſad circumſtances, and feels himſelf ſafe in the arms of his Saviour, and in the preſence of his God.

What amazing tranſport! What agreeable ſurpriſe! not to be uttered by the words of our ſcanty mortal language, nor conceived but by the perſon who feels it. The body indeed, which was the habitation of ſo pious a ſpirit, is demoliſhed at once: behold the lifeleſs carcaſe; it makes haſte to putrefaction. The releaſed ſoul in extaſy feels and ſurveys its own happineſs, appears before the throne, is acknowledged there as one of the ſons of God, and inveſted with the glories of the upper world. Sorrows and ſins, guilt, fetters and darkneſs vaniſh for ever: It exults in liberty and light, and dwells for ever under the ſmiles of God.

What was it could provoke the wiſe and gracious God to permit the wicked ſpirit to vex one of his own children at this rate, and to deal ſo ſeverely with the man whom he loves? to expoſe that ſoul to exquiſite

anguiſh in the fleſh which he deſigned the ſame day to make a partner with bleſſed ſpirits? To expreſs in one hour ſo much terror and ſo much mercy?

St. *Paul* will give a ſhort and plain anſwer to this inquiry. *Rom.* viii. 10. *The body is dead becauſe of ſin, but the ſpirit is life becauſe of righteouſneſs.* Hence that anguiſh, thoſe agonies and convulſions in the ſinful fleſh that muſt die, and theſe will be felt in ſome meaſure by the partner-ſpirit; though that ſpirit being veſted with divine righteouſneſs, or juſtified in the ſight of God, ſhall ſurvive theſe agonies in a peaceful immortality. Though the ſufferings of the Son of God have redeemed it from an everlaſting hell, yet it becomes the offended Majeſty of heaven ſometimes to give ſenſible inſtances what miſery the pardoned ſinner has deſerved; and the moment that he receives him into full bleſſedneſs, may, on ſome accounts, be the fitteſt to make a diſplay of all his terror, that the ſoul may have the full taſte of felicity, and pay the higher honours to recovering grace. The demolition of the earthly tabernacle with all the pangs and the groans that attend it, are a ſhadow of that vengeance which was due even to the beſt of ſaints: it is fit we ſhould ſee the picture of vindictive juſtice, before we are taken into the arms of eternal mercy.

Beſides, there may be another reaſon that renders the dying hour of this man more dreadful too: perhaps he had walked unwatchfully before God, and had given too much indulgence to ſome congenial iniquity, ſome vice that eaſily beſet him; now it becomes the great God to write his own hatred of ſin in deep and piercing characters ſometimes on his own children, that he may let the world know that he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity any where without reſentment. The man had *built much hay and ſtubble upon the* divine *foundation Chriſt Jeſus*, and it was proper that he ſhould *be ſaved ſo as by fire.* 1 *Cor.* iii. 15.

Will the Papiſt therefore attempt to ſupport the ſtructure of his *purgatory* upon ſuch a text as this? An uſeleſs ſtructure, and a vain attempt! That place

was erected by the superstitious fancy of men, to purge out the sins of a dead man by his own sufferings, and to make him fit for heaven in times hereafter; as though the atoning blood of *Christ* were not sufficient for complete pardon, or the sanctifying work of the *Spirit* were imperfect even after death. Whereas the design of God in some such instances of terror, is chiefly to give now-and-then an example to survivors in this life, how highly he is displeased with sin, and to discourage his own people from an indulgence of the works of the flesh. Now this end could not be attained by all the pains of their pretended *purgatory*, even though it were a real place of torment, because it is so invisible and unknown.

But whatsoever sorrows the dying Christian sustains in the wise administrations of Providence, it is by no means to make compensation to God for sin; the atoning work of *Christ* is complete still, and the sanctifying work of the *Spirit* perfect as soon as the soul is dismissed from earth; therefore it has an entrance into full blessedness, such as becomes a God infinite in mercy to bestow on a penitent sinner, presented before the throne in the name and righteousness of his own Son. *We are complete in him*, *Col.* ii. 10. By him made perfectly acceptable to God at our death, we are filled with all grace, and introduced into complete glory.

II. *The Death of a young Son.*

In a Letter to a Friend.

MADAM, it has been the delight and practice of the pious in all ages, to talk in the words of scripture, and in the language of their God: the images of that book are bright and beautiful; and where they happily correspond with any present providence, there is a certain divine pleasure in the parallel. The *Jews* have ever used it as a fashionable style,

and it has always been the cuſtom of *Chriſtians* in the moſt religious times, till iniquity and profaneneſs called it *cant* and *fanaticiſm*. The *Evangeliſts* and the *Apoſtles* have juſtified the practice; thoſe later inſpired authors have often indulged it, even where the Prophet, or firſt writer of the text, had quite another ſubject in view: and though an *alluſion* to the words of ſcripture will by no means ſtand in the place of a proper expoſition, yet it carries ſomething divine and affecting in it; and by this means it may ſhine in a ſermon, or a familiar epiſtle, and make a pleaſing *ſimilitude*. Accept then a few hints of conſolation from a part of ſcripture, which, by an eaſy turn of thought, may be applied to your caſe.

Rev. XII. 1. *A woman clothed with the ſun, and the moon under her feet:* v. 2. *Being with child, travailed in birth:* v. 5. *And ſhe brought forth a man-child, and it was caught up to God and his throne:* v. 6. *And the woman had a place prepared of God in the wilderneſs,* v. 14. *To be nouriſhed for a time and times:* v. 9. *But the great dragon that was caſt out of heaven, the old ſerpent called the Devil and Satan,* v. 13. *Perſecuted the woman:* v. 15. *And caſt out of his mouth water as a flood:* v. 17. *And went to make war with the remnant of her ſeed.*

Thus far the words of ſcripture.

Now, Madam, if you have put on *Chriſt*, and are clothed by faith with the Sun of righteouſneſs; if you are dreſt in the ſhining graces of heaven, and have the pale and changing glories of this world under your feet, then you may be aſſured the child that you have brought forth is not loſt, but is caught up to God and his throne, by virtue of that extenſive covenant which includes ſincere Chriſtians and their offspring together. Mourn not therefore for your ſon who is with God, but rather for yourſelf, who are yet in the wilderneſs of this world, where the old ſerpent has ſo much power; where he will perſecute you with the flood of his temptations, if poſſible to carry you away with

them; but I truſt God has prepared a place for your ſafety, even his church, his goſpel, his own everlaſting arms.

Yet ſhall the ſerpent make war with the remnant of your ſeed; your little daughter that remains in the wilderneſs muſt go through this war, and be expoſed to theſe temptations. O turn your tears from your ſon, into pity and prayer for yourſelf and your daughter, that ye may never be carried away by theſe floods; but when the times are paſt which God has appointed for your abode and nouriſhment in the wilderneſs, you may rejoice to find yourſelf, with all your offspring, in everlaſting ſafety before the throne of God. *Amen.*

So prays your affectionate, &c.

I. W.

May 2, 1719.

III. *Heathen Poeſy Chriſtianized.* 1736.

IT is a piece of ancient and ſacred hiſtory which *Moſes* informs us of, that when the tribes of *Iſrael* departed from the land of *Egypt*, they borrowed of their neighbours gold and jewels, by the appointment of God, for the decoration of their ſacrifices and ſolemn worſhip, when they ſhould arrive at the appointed place in the wilderneſs. God himſelf taught his people how the richeſt of metals which had ever been abuſed to the worſhip of idols, might be purified by the fire, and being melted up into a new form, might be conſecrated to the ſervice of the living God, and add to the magnificence and grandeur of his tabernacle and temple. Such are ſome of the poetical writings of the ancient *Heathens*: they have a great deal of native beauty and luſtre in them, and through ſome happy turn given them by the pen of a Chriſtian poet, may be transformed into divine meditations, and may aſſiſt the devout and pious ſoul in ſeveral parts of the Chriſtian life and worſhip.

Amongſt all the reſt of the *Pagan* writers, I know none ſo fit for this ſervice as the Odes of *Horace*, as vile a ſinner as he was. Their manner of compoſure comes nearer the ſpirit and force of the Pſalms of *David* than any other; and as we take the devotions of the *Jewiſh* king, and bring them into our *Chriſtian* churches, by changing the ſcene and the chronology, and ſuperadding ſome of the glories of the goſpel, ſo the repreſentation of ſome of the *Heathen Virtues*, by a little more labour, may be changed into *Chriſtian Graces*, or at leaſt into the image of them, ſo far as human power can reach. One day muſing on this ſubject, I made an experiment on the two laſt ſtanzas of *Ode* 29. Book III.

Non meum eſt, ſi mugiat Africis
Malus procellis, ad miſeras preces
Decurrere, et votis paciſci,
Ne Cypriæ Tyriæque merces
Addant avaro divitias mari.
Tunc me biremis præſidio ſcapha,
Tutum per Ægeos tumultus
Aura feret, geminuſque Pollux.

The Britiſh Fiſherman.

I.

Let *Spain*'s proud traders, when the maſt
Bends groaning to the ſtormy blaſt,
Run to their beads with wretched plaints,
And vow and bargain with their ſaints,
Leſt *Turkiſh* ſilks, or *Tyrian* wares,
Sink in their drowning ſhip,
Or the rich duſt *Peru* prepares,
Defraud their long projecting cares,
And add new treaſures to the greedy deep.

II.

My little ſkiff, that ſkims the ſhores,
With half a ſail, and two ſhort oars,
Provides me food in gentler waves:
But if they gape in wat'ry graves,
I truſt th' eternal power, whoſe hand
Hath ſwell'd the ſtorm ſo high,
To waft my boat, and me to land,
Or give ſome angel ſwift command
To bear the drowning ſailor to the ſky.

IV. *Redemption.*

I.

THE mighty frame of glorious grace,
That brighteſt monument of praiſe
That e'er the God of love deſign'd,
Employs and fills my labouring mind.

II.

Begin, my muſe, the heav'nly ſong,
A burden for an angel's tongue:
When *Gabriel* ſounds theſe awful things,
He tunes and ſummons all his ſtrings.

III.

Proclaim inimitable love:
Jeſus, the Lord of worlds above,
Puts off the beams of bright array,
And vails the God in mortal clay.

IV.

What black reproach defil'd his name,
When with our ſin he took our ſhame!
The power whom kneeling angels bleſt
Is made the impious rabble's jeſt.

V.

He that diſtributes crowns and thrones,
Hangs on a tree and bleeds and groans:
The Prince of life reſigns his breath,
The King of glory bows to death.

VI.

But ſee the wonders of his power,
He triumphs in his dying hour,
And whilſt by *Satan*'s rage he fell,
He daſh'd the riſing hopes of hell.

VII.

Thus were the hoſts of death ſubdu'd,
And ſin was drown'd in *Jeſus'* blood;
Then he aroſe, and reigns above,
And conquers ſinners by his love.

If I could purſue all the wondrous achievements of a dying and a riſing Saviour *in verſe, as faſt and as far as my thoughts ſometimes attempt to trace them, I ſhould lengthen this* Ode *to many* ſtanzas, *and yet at laſt I ſhould loſe both my thoughts and my verſe amongſt the unknown wonders of his glory, and the ages of eternity.*

Who ſhall fulfil this boundleſs ſong?
What vain pretender dares?
The theme ſurmounts an angel's tongue,
And *Gabriel*'s harp deſpairs *.

* Note. *In this ode, there are three or four lines taken from* Mr. Stennet's Sacramental Hymns, *for when I found they expreſt my thought and deſign in proper and beautiful language, I choſe rather to borrow and acknowledge the debt, than to labour hard for worſe lines, that I might have the poor pleaſure of calling them my own.*

V. *Complaint and Hope under great Pain.* 1736.

I.

LORD, I am pain'd; but I reſign
To thy ſuperior will:
'Tis grace, 'tis wiſdom all divine,
Appoints the pains I feel.

II.

Dark are thy ways of providence,
While thoſe that love thee groan:
Thy reaſons lie conceal'd from ſenſe,
Myſterious and unknown.

III.

Yet nature may have leave to ſpeak,
And plead before her God,
Leſt the o'er-burden'd heart ſhould break
Beneath thy heavy rod.

IV.

Will nothing but ſuch daily pain
Secure my ſoul from hell?
Canſt thou not make my health attain
Thy kind deſigns as well?

V.

How ſhall my tongue proclaim thy grace
While thus at home confin'd?
What can I write, while painful fleſh
Hangs heavy on the mind?

VI.

Theſe groans and ſighs and flowing tears
Give my poor ſpirit eaſe,
While ev'ry groan my Father hears,
And ev'ry tear he ſees.

VII.

Is not ſome ſmiling hour at hand
With peace upon its wings?
Give it, O God, thy ſwift command,
With all the joys it brings.

VI. *On an* Elegy, *written by the Right Honourable the Counteſs of* Hertford, *on the Death of Mrs. Rowe.* 1737.

STRUCK with the ſight of *Philomela*'s urn
Euſebia weeps, and calls her muſe to mourn;
While from her lips the tuneful ſorrows fell
The groves confeſs a riſing *Philomel.*

VII. *Dr.* Young's *admirable Deſcription of the Peacock enlarged.*

VIEW next the peacock: what bright glories run
From plume to plume, and vary in the ſun?
Proudly he boaſts, then to the heav'nly ray,
Gives all his colours, and adorns the day.
Was it thy pencil, *Job*, divinely bold,
Dreſt his rich form in azure, green, and gold?
Thy hand his creſt with ſtarry radiance crown'd,
Or ſpread his ſweepy train? his train diſdains the ground,
And kindles living lamps through all the ſpacious round.
Mark with what conſcious ſtate the bird diſplays
His native gems, and 'midſt the waving blaze
On the ſlow ſtep of majeſty he moves,
Aſſerts his honours, and demands his loves.

VIII. *Vanity inſcribed on all Things.*

TIME, like a long flowing ſtream, makes haſte into eternity, and is for ever loſt and ſwallowed up there; and while it is haſtening to its period, it ſweeps away all things with it which are not immortal. There is a limit appointed by providence, to the duration of all the pleaſant and deſirable ſcenes of life, to all the works of the hands of men, with all the glories and excellencies of animal nature, and all that is made of fleſh and blood. Let us not doat upon any thing here below, for heaven hath inſcribed vanity upon it. The moment is haſtening when the decree of heaven ſhall be uttered, and providence ſhall pronounce upon every glory of the earth, *Its time ſhall be no longer.*

What is that ſtately *building*, that princely *palace*, which now entertains and amuſes our ſight with ranks of marble columns, and wide-ſpreading arches, that gay edifice which enriches our imagination with a thouſand royal ornaments, and a profuſion of coſtly and glittering furniture? Time, and all its circling hours, with a ſwift wing are bruſhing it away; decay ſteals upon it inſenſibly, and a few years hence it ſhall lie in mouldering ruin and deſolation. Unhappy poſſeſſor, if he has no better inheritance!

What are thoſe fine and elegant *gardens*, thoſe delightful walks, thoſe gentle aſcents and ſoft declining ſlopes, which raiſe and ſink the eye by turns to a thouſand vegetable pleaſures? How lovely are thoſe ſweet borders, and thoſe growing varieties of bloom and fruit, which recall loſt paradiſe to mind? Thoſe living *parterres* which regale the ſenſe with vital fragrancy, and make glad the ſight by their refreſhing verdure and intermingled flowery beauties? The ſcythe of time is paſſing over them all: they wither, they die away, they drop and vaniſh into duſt; their duration is ſhort; a few months deface all their yearly glories, and within a few years, perhaps all theſe riſing terras-walks, theſe gentle verging declivities, ſhall loſe all order and

elegance, and become a rugged heap of ruins: thoſe well-diſtinguiſhed borders and parterres ſhall be levelled in confuſion, and thrown into common earth again, for the ox and the aſs to graze upon them. Unhappy man, who poſſeſſes this agreeable ſpot of ground, if he has no paradiſe more durable than this!

And no wonder that theſe labours of the hands of men ſhould periſh, when even the works of God are periſhable.

What are theſe *viſible heavens*, theſe lower *ſkies*, and this globe of *earth!* They are indeed the glorious workmanſhip of the Almighty. But they are waxing old, and waiting their period too, when the angel ſhall pronounce upon them that *Time ſhall be no more.* The heavens *ſhall be folded up as a veſture, the elements* of the lower world *ſhall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, and all the works thereof, ſhall be burnt up with fire.* May the unruinable world be but my portion, and the heaven of heavens my inheritance, which is built for an eternal manſion for the ſons of God: theſe buildings ſhall out-live time and nature, and exiſt through unknown ages of felicity!

What have we mortals to be proud of in our preſent ſtate, when every human glory is ſo fugitive and fading? Let the brighteſt and the beſt of us ſay to ourſelves, that *we are but duſt and vanity.*

Is my body formed upon a graceful model? Are my limbs well turned, and my complexion better coloured than my neighbours? Beauty, even in perfection, is of the ſhorteſt date; a few years will inform me that its bloom vaniſhes, its flower withers, its luſtre grows dim, its duration ſhall be no longer; and if life be prolonged, yet the pride and glory of it is for ever loſt in age and wrinkles: or perhaps our vanity meets a ſpeedier fate. Death and the grave, with a ſovereign and irreſiſtible command, ſummon the brighteſt as well as the coarſeſt pieces of human nature, to lie down early in their cold embraces; and at laſt they muſt all mix together, among worms and corruption. *Æſop* the deformed, and *Helena* the fair, are loſt and

undiſtinguiſhed in common earth. Nature in its gayeſt bloom, is but a painted vanity.

Are my nerves well ſtrung and vigorous? Is my activity and ſtrength far ſuperior to my neighbours in the days of youth? But youth hath its appointed limit: age ſteals upon it, unſtrings the nerves, and makes the force of nature languiſh into infirmity and feebleneſs. *Sampſon* and *Goliath* would have loſt their boaſted advantages of ſtature and their brawny limbs, in the courſe of half a century, though the one had eſcaped the ſling of *David*, and the other the vengeance of his own hands in the ruin of *Dagon*'s temple. Man, in his beſt eſtate, is a flying ſhadow and vanity.

Even theſe nobler powers of human life, which ſeem to have ſomething angelical in them, I mean the powers of wit and fancy, gay imagination, and capacious memory, they are all ſubject to the ſame laws of decay and death. What though they can raiſe and animate beautiful ſcenes in a moment, and in imitation of creating power, can ſpread bright appearances and new worlds before the ſenſes and the ſouls of their friends? What though they can entertain the better part of mankind, the refined and polite world with high delight and rapture? Theſe ſcenes of rapturous delight grow flat and old by a frequent review, and the very powers that raiſed them grow feeble apace. What though they can give immortal applauſe and fame to their poſſeſſors! It is but the immortality of an empty name, a mere ſucceſſion of the breath of men; and it is a ſhort ſort of immortality too, which muſt die and periſh when this world periſhes. A poor ſhadow of duration indeed, while the real period of theſe powers is haſtening every day; they languiſh and die as faſt as animal nature which has a large ſhare in them, makes haſte to its decay; and the time of their exerciſe ſhall ſhortly be no more.

In vain the aged poet or the painter, would call up the muſe and genius of their youth, and ſummon all the arts of their imagination, to ſpread and dreſs out ſome viſionary ſcene: in vain the elegant orator would

recall the bold and maſterly figures, and all thoſe flowery images which gave ardour, grace, and dignity to his younger compoſures, and charmed every ear; they are gone, they are fled beyond the reach of their owner's call: their time is paſt, they are vaniſhed and loſt beyond all hope of recovery.

The God of nature has pronounced an unpaſſable period, upon all the powers and pleaſures, and glories of this mortal ſtate. Let us then be afraid to make any of them our boaſt or our happineſs; but point our affections to thoſe diviner objects, whoſe nature is everlaſting; let us ſeek thoſe religious attainments, and thoſe new-created powers of a ſanctified mind, concerning which it ſhall never be pronounced, that their *Time ſhall be no longer*.

O may every one of us be humbly content, at the call of heaven, to part with all that is pleaſing or magnificent here on earth; let us reſign even theſe agreeable talents when the God of nature demands; and when the hour arrives, that ſhall cloſe our eyes to all viſible things, and lay our fleſhly ſtructure in the duſt; let us yield up our whole ſelves to the hands of our Creator, who ſhall reſerve our ſpirits with himſelf; and while we cheerfully give up all that was mortal to the grave, we may lie down full of the joyful hope of a riſing immortality. New and unknown powers and glories, brighter flames of imagination, richer ſcenes of wit and fancy, and diviner talents are preparing for us, when we ſhall awake from the duſt; and the mind itſelf ſhall have all its faculties in a ſublime ſtate of improvement. Theſe ſhall make us equal, if not ſuperior, to angels, for we are nearer a-kin to the Son of God than they are, and therefore we ſhall be made more like him.

IX. *The Rake reformed in the Houſe of Mourning.*

FLORINO was young and idle; he gave himſelf up to all the diverſions of the town, and roved wild among the pleaſures of ſenſe; nor did he confine himſelf within the limits of virtue, or withhold his heart from any forbidden joy. Often hath he been heard to ridicule marriage, and affirm that no man can mourn heartily for a dead wife; for then he hath leave by the law to chooſe a new companion, to riot in all the gayer ſcenes of a new courtſhip, and perhaps to advance his fortune too.

When he heard of the death of *Serena*, "Well," ſaid he, "I will go viſit my friend *Lucius*, and rally "him a little on this occaſion." He went the next day in all the wantonneſs of his heart to fulfil his deſign, inhuman and barbarous as it was, and to ſport with ſolemn ſorrow. But when *Lucius* appeared, the man of gaiety was ſtrangely ſurpriſed; he ſaw ſuch a ſincere and inimitable diſtreſs ſitting on his countenance, and diſcovering itſelf in every air and action, that he dropt his cruel purpoſe, his ſoul began to melt, and he aſſumed the comforter.

Florino's methods of conſolation were all drawn from two topics: Some from *fate* and *neceſſity*, adviſing an heroic indolence about unavoidable events, which are paſt and cannot be reverſed; and ſome were derived from the various amuſements of life which call the ſoul abroad, and divide and ſcatter the thoughts, and ſuffer not the mind to attend to its inward anguiſh. "Come, *Lucius*," ſaid he, "come, ſmooth your brows "a little, and brighten up for an hour or two. Come "along with me to a concert this evening, where you "ſhall hear ſome of the beſt pieces of muſic that were "ever compoſed, and performed by ſome of the beſt "hands that ever touched an inſtrument. To-morrow "I will wait on you to the play, or if you pleaſe, to "the new opera, where the ſcenes are ſo ſurpriſing "and ſo gay, they would almoſt tempt an old hermit

" from his beloved cell, and call back his years to " three-and-twenty. Come, my friend, what have the " living to do with the dead? Do but forget your " grievances a little and they will die too: Come, " ſhake off the ſpleen, divert your heart with the en- " tertainments of wit and melody, and call away your " fancy from theſe gloomy and uſeleſs contempla- " tions." Thus he ran on in his own way of talking, and opened to his mourning friend the beſt ſprings of comfort that he was acquainted with.

Lucius endured this prattle as long as he was able to endure it, but it had no manner of influence to ſtanch the bleeding wound, or to abate his ſmarting ſorrows. His pain waxed more intenſe by ſuch ſort of applications, and the grief ſoon grew too unruly to contain itſelf.

Lucius then aſked leave to retire a little: *Florino* followed him ſoftly at a diſtance to the door of his cloſet, where indeed he obſerved not any of the rules of civility or juſt decency, but placed himſelf near enough to liſten how the paſſion took its vent: and there he heard the diſtreſſed *Lucius* mourning over *Serena*'s death in ſuch language as this:

What did *Florino* talk about? *Neceſſity* and *Fate?* Alas! this is my miſery, that ſo painful an event cannot be reverſed, that the Divine Will has made it *fate*, and there is a *neceſſity* of my enduring it.

Plays and *muſic* and *operas!* What poor trifles are theſe to give eaſe to a wounded heart? To a heart that has loſt its choiceſt half! A heart that lies bleeding in deep anguiſh under ſuch a keen parting ſtroke, and the long, long abſence of my *Serena!* She is gone.—The deſire of my eyes and the delight of my ſoul is gone.—The firſt of earthly comforts, and the beſt of mortal bleſſings.—She is gone, and ſhe has taken with her all that was pleaſant, all that could brighten the gloomy hours of life, that could ſoften the cares and relieve the burdens of it.—She is gone, and the beſt portion and joy of my life is departed. Will ſhe never return, never come back and bleſs my

eyes again? No; never, never.—She will no more come back to viſit this wretched world, and to dry theſe weeping eyes. That beſt portion of my life, that deareſt bleſſing is gone, and will return no more. Sorrows in long ſucceſſion await me while I live; all my future days are marked out for grief and darkneſs. Let the man who feels no inward pain at the loſs of ſuch a partner, dreſs his dwelling in black ſhades and diſmal formalities: Let him draw the curtains of darkneſs around him, and teach his chambers a faſhionable mourning: but real anguiſh of heart needs none of theſe modiſh and diſſembled ſorrows. My ſoul is hung round with dark images in all her apartments, and every ſcene is ſincere lamentation and death.

I thought once I had ſome pretences to the courage of a man: but this is a ſeaſon of untried diſtreſs: I now ſhudder at a thought, I ſtart at ſhadows, my ſpirits are ſunk, and horror has taken hold of me. I feel paſſions in me that were unknown before; love has its own proper grief and its peculiar anguiſh. Mourning love has thoſe agonies and thoſe ſinkings of ſpirit, which are known only to bereaved and virtuous lovers.

I ſtalk about like a ghoſt, in muſing ſilence, till the gathering ſorrow grows too big for the heart, and burſts out into weak and unmanly wailings. Strange and overwhelming ſtroke indeed! It has melted all the man within me down to ſoftneſs: my nature is gone back to childhood again: I would maintain the dignity of my age and my ſex, but theſe eyes rebel and betray me; the eye-lids are full, they overflow; the drops of love and grief trickle down my cheeks, and plough the furrows of age there before their time.

How often in a day are theſe ſluices opened afreſh? The ſight of every friend that knew her, calls up my weakneſs and betrays my frailty. I am quite aſhamed of myſelf. What ſhall I do? Is there nothing of manhood left about my heart? I will reſiſt the paſſion, I will ſtruggle with nature, I will grow indolent and forbid my tears. Alas! poor feeble wretch that I am! In vain I ſtruggle; in vain I reſiſt: The aſſumed in-

dolence vaniſhes; the real paſſion works within, it ſwells and bears down all before it: the torrent riſes and prevails hourly, and nature will have its way. Even the Son of God, when he became man, was found weeping at the tomb of a darling friend. *Lazarus* died, and *Jeſus* wept.

O my ſoul, what ſhall I do to relieve this heart-ache? How ſhall I cure this painful ſenſibility? Is there no opiate will reach it? Whither ſhall I go to leave my ſorrows behind me? I wander from one room to another, and wherever I go, I ſtill ſeem to ſeek her, but I miſs her ſtill. My imagination flatters me with her lovely image, and tempts me to doubt, Is ſhe dead indeed? My fond imagination would fain forget her death-bed, and impoſe upon my hope that I ſhall find her ſomewhere. I viſit her apartment, I ſteal into her cloſet: in days paſt, when I have miſſed her in the parlour, how often have I found the dear creature in that beloved corner of the houſe, that ſweet place of divine retirement and converſe with heaven? But even that cloſet is empty now. I go thither, and I retire in diſappointment and confuſion.

Methinks I ſhould meet her in ſome of her walks, in ſome of her family cares, or her innocent amuſements: I ſhould ſee her face, methinks, I ſhould hear her voice, and exchange a tender word or two.——Ah, fooliſh rovings of a diſtreſſed and diſquieted fancy! Every room is empty and ſilent; cloſet, parlours, chambers, all empty, all ſilent; and that very ſilence and emptineſs proclaim my ſorrows: even emptineſs and deep ſilence join to confeſs the painful loſs.

Shall I try then to put her quite out of my thoughts, ſince ſhe will come no more within the reach of my ſenſes? Shall I looſen the fair picture, and drop it from my heart, ſince the fairer original is for ever gone? Go, then, fair picture, go from my boſom, and appear to my ſoul no more. Hard word! but it muſt be done: go, depart thou deareſt form; thou moſt lovely of images, go from my heart; thy preſence is now too painful in that tender part of me. O unhappy

word! Thy presence painful? A dismal change indeed! When thou wert wont to arise and shew thyself there, graces and joys were wont to arise and shew themselves: graces and joys went always with her, nor did her image ever appear without them, till that dark and bitter day that spread the vail of death over her: but her image, dreſt in that gloomy vail, hath loſt all the attendant joys and graces. Let her picture vaniſh from my ſoul then, ſince it has loſt thoſe endearing attendants: let it vaniſh away into forgetfulneſs, for death has robbed it of every grace and every joy.

Yet ſtay a little there, tempting image, let me once more ſurvey thee; ſtay a little moment, and let me take one laſt glance, one ſolemn farewell. Is there not ſomething in the reſemblance of her too lovely, ſtill to have it quite baniſhed from my heart? Can I ſet my ſoul at work to try to forget her? Can I deal ſo unkindly with one, who would never have forgotten me? Can my ſoul live without her image on it? Is it not ſtampt there too deep ever to be effaced?

Methinks I feel all my heart-ſtrings wrapt around her, and grow ſo faſt to that dear picture in my fancy, they ſeem to be rooted there. To be divided from it is to die. Why ſhould I then purſue ſo vain and fruitleſs an attempt? What! forget myſelf, forget my life? No; it cannot be; nor can I bear to think of ſuch a rude and cruel treatment of an image ſo much deſerving and ſo much beloved. Neither paſſion nor reaſon permits me to forget her, nor is it within my power. She is preſent almoſt to all my thoughts: ſhe is with me in all my motions; grief has arrows with her name upon them, that ſtick as faſt and as deep as thoſe of love; they cleave to my vitals whereſoever I go, but with a quicker ſenſation, and a keener pain. Alas! it is love and grief together that have ſhot all their arrows into my heart, and filled every vein with acute anguiſh and long diſtreſs.

Whither then ſhall I fly to find ſolace and eaſe? I cannot depart from myſelf: I cannot abandon theſe tender and ſmarting ſenſations. Shall I quit the houſe

and all the apartments of it which renew her dear memory? Shall I rove in these open fields which lie near my dwelling, and spread wide their pleasing verdure? Shall I give my soul a loose to all nature that smiles around me, or shall I confine my daily walk to this shady and delightful garden? Oh, no: neither of these will relieve my anguish. *Serena* has too often blessed me with her company, both in this garden and in these fields. Her very name seems written on every tree: I shall think of her, and fancy I see her in every step I take. Here she prest the grass with her feet, here she gathered violets and roses and refreshing herbs, and gave the lovely collection of sweetness into my hand. But alas! the sweetest violet and the fairest rose is fallen, is withered, and is no more. Farewell then, ye fields and gardens, with all your varieties of green and flowery joys! Ye are all a desert, a barren wilderness, since *Serena* has for ever left you, and will be seen there no more.

But can friends do nothing to comfort a mourner? Come, my wise friends, surround me, and divert my cares with your agreeable conversation. Can books afford no relief? Come, my books, ye volumes of knowledge, ye labours of the learned dead; come, fill up my hours with some soothing amusement. I call my better friends about me, I fly to the heroes and the philosophers of ancient ages, to employ my soul among them. But alas! neither learning nor books amuse me, nor green and smiling prospects of nature delight me, nor conversation with my wisest and best friends can entertain me in these dark and melancholy hours. Solitude, solitude, in some unseen corner, some lonely grotto, overgrown with shades, this is my dearest choice. Let me dwell in my beloved solitude, where none shall come near me; midnight and solitude are the most pleasing things to a man who is weary of day-light, and of all the scenes of this visible and busy world. I would eat and drink and dwell alone, though this lonesome humour sooths and gratifies the painful passion, and gives me up to the tyranny of my sharpest

ſorrows. Strange mixture that I am made of! I mourn and grieve even to death, and yet I ſeem fond of nothing but grief and mourning.

Wo is me! Is there nothing on earth can divert, nothing relieve me? Then let my thoughts aſcend to paradiſe and heaven, there I ſhall find her better part, and grief muſt not enter there. From this hour take a new turn, O my ſoul, and never think of *Serena* but as ſhining and rejoicing among the ſpirits of the bleſt, and in the preſence of her God. Riſe often in holy meditation to the celeſtial world, and betake thyſelf to more intenſe piety. Devotion has wings that will bear thee high above the tumults and paſſions of lower life: devotion will direct and ſpeed thy flight to a country of brighter ſcenes.

Shake off this earthlineſs of mind, this duſt of mortality that hangs about thee; riſe upward often in an hour, and dwell much in thoſe regions whither thy devout partner is gone: thy better half is ſafely arrived there, and that world knows nothing but joy and love.

She is gone; the prophets and the apoſtles, and the beſt of departed ſouls, have marked out her way to heaven: bear witneſs ye apoſtles and holy prophets, ye beſt of departed ſouls bear witneſs, that I am ſeeking to follow her in the appointed moment. Let the wheels of nature and time roll on apace in their deſtined way. Let ſuns and moons ariſe and ſet apace, and light a loneſome traveller onward to his home. Bleſſed *Jeſus*, be thou my living Leader! Virtue, and the track of *Serena's* feet be my daily and delightful path. The track leads upward to the regions of love and joy. How can I dare to wander from the path of virtue, leſt I loſe that beloved track? Remember, O my ſoul, her footſteps are found in no other road.

If my love to virtue ſhould ever fail me, the ſteps of my *Serena* would mark out my way, and help to ſecure me from wandering. O may the kind influences of heaven deſcend from above, and eſtabliſh and guard my pious reſolutions! May the divine powers of

religion be my continual ſtrength, and the hope of eternal things my never-failing ſupport, till I am diſmiſſed from this priſon of the fleſh, and called to aſcend to the ſpirits of the juſt made perfect; till I bid adieu to all that is not immortal, and go dwell with my God and my adored Saviour; there ſhall I find my loſt *Serena* again, and ſhare with her the unutterable joys of paradiſe.

Here *Lucius* threw himſelf on the couch, and lay ſilent in profound meditation.

When *Florino* had heard all this mournful rhapſody, he retired and ſtole way in ſecret, for he was now utterly aſhamed of his firſt barbarous deſign: he felt a ſort of ſtrange ſympathy of ſorrow ſuch as he never knew before, and with it ſome ſparks of virtue began to kindle in his boſom. As he muſed the fire burnt within, and at laſt it made its way to his lips, and vented itſelf. "Well," ſaid he, "I have learnt *two* "*excellent leſſons* to-day, and I hope I ſhall never forget "them. There muſt be ſome vaſt and unknown "pleaſure in a virtuous love, beyond all the madneſs "of wild and tranſient amours; otherwiſe the loſs of "the object, could never have wrought ſuch deep and "unfeigned wo in a ſoul ſo firm and manly as that of "*Lucius*. I begin now to believe what *Milton* ſung, "though I always read the lines before as mere poeſy "and fable.

Hail wedded love, myſterious law, true ſource
Of human offspring, ſole propriety
In paradiſe, of all things common elſe;
By thee adulterous luſt was driven from men,
Among the beſtial herds to range; by thee,
Founded in reaſon, loyal, juſt, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, ſon, and brother, firſt were known:
Perpetual fountain of domeſtic ſweets.
Here love his golden ſhafts employs, here lights
His conſtant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought ſmile

Of harlots, loveleſs, joyleſs, unendear'd
Caſual amours, mixt dance, or wanton maſk,
Or midnight ball, &c.

"Bleſſed poet, that could ſo happily unite love and "virtue, and draw ſo beautiful a ſcene of real felicity, "which till this day I always thought was merely ro- "mantic and viſionary! *Lucius* has taught me to un- "derſtand theſe lines, for he has felt them; and me- "thinks while I repeat them now, I feel a ſtrange "new ſenſation. I am convinced, the blind poet ſaw "deeper into nature and truth than I could have ima- "gined. There is, there is ſuch a thing as a union "of virtuous ſouls, where happineſs is only found. I "find ſome glimmerings of ſacred light riſing upon "me, ſome unknown pantings within after ſuch a "partner and ſuch a life.

"Nor is the *other leſſon* which I have learnt, at all "inferior to this, but in truth it is of higher and more "durable importance. I confeſs ſince I was nineteen "years old, I never thought virtue and religion had "been good for any thing, but to tie up children "from miſchief, and frighten fools: but now I find "by the conduct of my friend *Lucius*, that as the "ſweeteſt and ſincereſt joys of life are derived from "virtue, ſo the moſt diſtreſſing ſorrows may find a juſt "relief in religion and ſincere piety. Hear me, thou "almighty Maker of my frame, pity and aſſiſt a re- "turning wanderer; and O may thy hand ſtamp theſe "leſſons upon my ſoul in everlaſting characters!"

X. *Thou haſt received Gifts for Men.* Pſalm lxviii. 18.

JESUS the Mediator emptied himſelf for our ſakes, when he deſcended to earth in order to die for us, and by his death to ſubdue our enemies. Now the Father has filled him again at his aſcent into heaven with every glory and every bleſſing, with all authority and power to beſtow bleſſings, graces and glories on

the ſons of men. *It pleaſed the Father, that in him all fulneſs ſhould dwell. All power in heaven and earth was given into his hands.* Col. i. 19. Matth. xxviii. 18. And when he received the power he diſtributed the bleſſings. See Acts ii. 33. *Being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promiſe of the Holy Ghoſt, he hath ſhed forth this, which ye now ſee and hear.* He hath ſhed abroad miracles and graces in abundance amongſt the inhabitants of the lower world.

The triumphs of majeſty muſt have ſome mercy in them, and enſigns of victory muſt be interwoven with ſignal diſplays of bounty and grace. *When he led captivity captive, he received gifts for men.* Our conquering Redeemer was not ſo elevated with the pomp of his triumphs over the angels his captive enemies, as to forget the captives that he releaſed among the children of *Adam.* He received many donatives from his Father on high, to ſhower down among them upon his coronation-day, that illuſtrious day, when *He that in righteouſneſs had made war and conquered, received on his own head many crowns.* Rev. xix. 11, 12.

He that could take ſo much pleaſure on earth in his labours of love, takes more delight in heaven in the diſtributions of grace. This is the ſweeteſt part of his triumph, and the moſt viſible among men, even the gifts of the Spirit that he ſent down after his aſcenſion. It was neceſſary that his grace ſhould have ſome ſhare of the glory of that day.

What was ſaid of the great day of deliverance, when the *Jews* obtained victory over their deſigned murderers, may be applied with honour to the day when our Lord aſcended to heaven, and celebrated his triumph over the ſpirits of darkneſs. *This was a good day* for Iſrael, for all the ſaints; a day *when* Jeſus *reſted from his enemies*, and *a month which was turned unto him from ſorrow to joy, and from mourning into a day of gladneſs.* This was *a day* of receiving *portions* for his brethren, and *of ſending gifts to the poor.* Eſther ix. 22.

Jesus our King is the Prince of power, and the Prince of peace, he solemnized his victory with acts of mercy, and begun his reign with gifts of grace. He led *Satan* the arch-traitor bound at his chariot-wheels, and scattered donatives of pardon and life among the sons of *Adam* that had been seduced into the great rebellion.

It is another pleasant meditation on this text, *That God the Father had not given away all his gifts to men, even when he gave them his only begotten Son;* for since that time he hath given his Son more gifts to be distributed among them. Learn hence the unwearied love of God, the inexhausted stores of divine mercy. *John* iv. 10. Christ is called the *gift of God.* And 2 *Cor.* ix. 15. *The unspeakable gift.* He gave his own Son out of his bosom, and gave him up to death for us. His Son that was nearest his heart, his Son the delight of his soul and darling of his eternal enjoyment; and yet he is not weary of giving. O the immeasurable treasures of grace! O the unlimitable bounties of our God! Stand amazed, O heavens, and let the earth lie low in thankfulness and wonder, and every holy soul adore this surprising love!

Our meditations may take another step, and see here the divine condescension to human weakness: how a giving God stoops to the capacity of receiving creatures, and bestows the richest blessings on us in a sweet and alluring manner of conveyance. When he gave his Son to us, he first arrayed him in flesh and blood, that the glories of the Deity might not affright us, nor his terror make us afraid. When he proceeds to confer on us further gifts, he puts them into the hands of his Son dwelling in our nature, that we might have easy access to him without fear, and receive gifts from him as a delightful medium, by whom a God of infinite purity hath a mind to confer favours on sinful man.

He has put all grace into those hands whence we ourselves would choose to fetch it. If a God of shining holiness and burning justice should appear like him-

ſelf and call to us, guilty wretches, and hold forth his hand, here are gifts, here are pardons, here are ſalvations for you, we ſhould be ready to ſay with *Job*, xiii. 21. *Withdraw thine hand far from me, and let not thy dread make me afraid.* But here we ſinners come to a man, to one that has worn our fleſh and blood, that is our brother, and of our own compoſition; we come with courage to him that looks like one of us to receive the gifts of a holy God, and the terrors of his holineſs ſink us not, nor doth the fire of his juſtice devour us. O my ſoul bow down and worſhip that God who ſtoops ſo low to thee, and has found ſuch a mild and gentle method of conferring his heavenly favours on thee.

XI. *The Gift of the Spirit.*

WHAT is dearer to *God the Father* than his only *Son?* And what diviner bleſſing has he to beſtow upon men than his holy *Spirit?* Yet has he given his Son for us, and by the hands of his Son he confers his bleſſed Spirit on us. *Jeſus having received of the Father the promiſe of the Spirit, ſhed it forth on men.* Acts ii. 33.

How the wondrous doctrine of the bleſſed Trinity ſhines through the whole of our religion, and ſheds a glo[illegible] upon every part of it! Here is God the Father, a King of infinite riches and glory, has conſtituted his beloved Son the High-treaſurer of heaven, and the holy Spirit is the divine and ineſtimable treaſure. What amazing doctrines of ſacred love are written in our Bibles! What myſteries of mercy, what miracles of glory are theſe! Our boldeſt deſires and moſt raiſed hopes, durſt never aim at ſuch bleſſings: there is nothing in all nature that can lead us to a thought of ſuch grace.

The Spirit was given by the Father to the Son for men; for *rebellious* and *ſinful men*, to make favourites and ſaints of them: this was the noble *gift* the Son

received when he aſcended on high, Pſal. lxviii. 18. And he diſtributed it to grace his triumph.

Was it not a divine honour which *Jeſus* our Lord diſplayed on that day, when the tongues of fire ſat on his twelve apoſtles; when he ſent his ambaſſadors to every nation to addreſs them in their own language, to notify his acceſſion to the throne of heaven, and to demand ſubjection to his government? When he conferred power upon his envoys to reverſe the laws of nature and imitate creation? To give eyes to the blind, and to raiſe the dead? All this was done by the Spirit which he ſent down upon them in the days of *Penteceſt*.

But is this Spirit given to none but his apoſtles and the prime miniſters in his kingdom? Was that rich treaſure exhauſted in the firſt ages of the goſpel, and none left for us? God forbid! Every one of his ſubjects have the ſame favour beſtowed upon them, though not in the ſame degree: every humble and holy ſoul in our day, every true Chriſtian is poſſeſſed of the Spirit, for *he that has not the Spirit of Chriſt is none of his*, Rom. viii. 9. And wherever this Spirit is, it works miracles too; it changes the ſinner to a ſaint, it opens his blind eyes; it new-creates his nature; it raiſes the dead to a divine life, and teaches *Egypt* and *Aſſyria* and the *Britiſh* iſles, to ſpeak the language of *Canaan*. It is this gift of the Spirit which the Son ſends down to us continually from the Father, that is the origin and ſpring of all theſe ſtrange bleſſings.

The Father has a heart of large bounty to the poor ruined race of *Adam*: the Son has a hand fit to be Almoner to the King of glory; and the Spirit is the rich alms. This bleſſed donative has enriched ten thouſand ſouls already, and there remains enough to enrich ten thouſand worlds.

The Father, what a glorious giver! the Son, what a glorious medium of communication! and the Spirit, what a glorious gift! We bluſh and adore while we partake of ſuch immenſe favours, and gratitude is even overwhelmed with wonder.

O let our ſpirits rejoice in this bleſſed article of our religion! and may all the temptations that we meet with from men of reaſon, never, never baffle ſo ſweet a faith!

XII. *The Day of Grace.*

IF you aſk the opinion of ſome divines concerning the day of grace, they will tell you, it ſignifies that particular ſeaſon of a man's life, when the Spirit of God by convictions and good motions ſtirs him up to ſeek after ſalvation, and gives him ſufficient grace to convert him; and all this while it was poſſible for him to be ſaved, and it was within the reach of his own power to make this grace effectual:—but this is determined to a certain, though unknown day, which if a man paſſes without being converted, then his ſalvation becomes impoſſible. Now, though I would not chooſe to borrow all my ſentiments in the chief doctrines of the goſpel, from the ſermons of a biſhop publiſhed on the *terms of ſalvation*, yet againſt this ſcheme I may venture to uſe an argument taken from that book.

Let us ſuppoſe, that it was declared in the goſpel, that there was a certain number of ſins, or a certain period of time, beyond which God would not pardon; and not any particular number, or time, was ſpecified to the world: yet ſtill moſt men (it is too juſtly to be feared) would firſt be led by *hope* to commit many ſins, with a flattering perſuaſion that they ſhould not come to that number, or arrive at that period: and then, when the habit was become ſtrong, they would be fixed by *deſpair* in this opinion, that being probably got paſt that number of ſins, and that period of grace, they had even as good continue in their ſins, as their inclination powerfully directs them; they would go on in great wickedneſs and ſay, *There is no hope.* And thus we ſee, that even his ſuppoſition which ſeems to take moſt care of the cauſe of holineſs, leaves it not only in a naked and unguarded, but in a very deſperate condition.

Concerning a day of grace thus much may be said, and this is all that I can understand by it (*viz.*) That in the life of a man, there are particular seasons when he enjoys more of the outward means of grace, or advantages for the good of his soul than at other times; that is, more constant opportunities of hearing the word, a more useful and affecting ministry, better company, warmer admonitions, and plainer warnings by divine Providence; more leisure and conveniencies for reading, meditation, and prayer: or, if all this continue all his life-time, yet there are seasons when the Spirit of God, by his common operations, does more powerfully convince of sin, and stir up the conscience to duty, and impress his word with more force upon the heart; but being opposed and resisted, he is grieved and departs, his workings grow daily fewer and feebler; or it may be he retires at once, and leaves the soul in a stupid frame and returns no more.

Yet we could not say heretofore, That the Spirit of God in his former operations, gave him a full and proximate sufficiency of inward converting grace before, since it proved so insufficient in the event and ineffectual: nor can we say now, that his day of grace is quite past and gone; because the Spirit of God, who is sovereign in mercy, may return again.

Yet it is a very good motive to urge upon delaying sinners, that it is a daring and dangerous piece of impiety and rebellion to quench the motions of the Holy Spirit; lest he depart grieved, and never return again; lest he never give them so fair an opportunity for conversion, never bring them so near again to the kingdom of heaven.

XIII. *God and Nature unsearchable.*

HOW poor and imperfect a creature is man! How unequal his knowledge of things! How large and almost immensely diffusive his acquaintance with some parts of nature, but how exceedingly limited and

narrow in others! The man of learning, who has the higheſt temptations to pride, has alſo the moſt powerful motives to humility.

Man can meaſure the heavens, tell how many miles the planet *Venus* is diſtant from *Jupiter*, and how far the *earth* from the *ſun*. He has found out with certainty the periods of their revolutions, and the hour of their eclipſes; he can adjuſt the affairs of the planetary world to a moment, their vaſt variety of appearances with all their prodigious circuits. But this great artiſt MAN, is puzzled at a worm or a fly, a grain of ſand or a drop of water: there is not the leaſt atom in the whole creation, but has queſtions about it unſearchable by human nature; no, nor the leaſt part of empty ſpace, but ſets all the wiſeſt philoſophers at variance when they attempt to tell what it is, or whether it be any thing or nothing.

This ſort of talk, my neighbours will ſay, is a flouriſh of wit to teach us to undervalue our reaſon, a mere rant of rhetoric, an hyperbole of reproach to our underſtanding: but while I leave it to aſtronomers to confirm what I have ſaid concerning the vaſt extent of their acquaintance with the heavens, I ſhall make it appear, even to a demonſtration, that our knowledge of the things on earth, is as mean as I have expreſt, in the literal and proper ſenſe.

There is not the leaſt grain of ſand on the ſhore, nor the leaſt atom in the whole creation, but has queſtions about it unſearchable by human nature.

This atom may be divided into millions of millions of pieces, and after all this the leaſt part of it will be infinitely diviſible. The infinite diviſibility of matter is ſo often proved and ſo univerſally granted by all modern philoſophers, that I need not ſtand to prove it here: yet that my unlearned readers may ſee and believe, I will ſet down a plain vulgar demonſtration or two of this matter.

I. IT is certain, that if matter be not infinitely diviſible, then there is, or may be, ſo ſmall a part of

matter which cannot be divided further: now take this ſuppoſed ſmalleſt part, this fancied atom, and put it between the points of a pair of compaſſes made of ſtiff and inflexible matter; it is evident, that the legs of the compaſſes in leſs and leſs degrees will be divided aſunder quite to the centre; and from the points to the centre, there is room for ſtill leſs and leſs pieces of matter to be put between the legs. Therefore that very ſuppoſed atom may be conceived to be divided ſtill further into leſs parts, and conſequently it was not indiviſible.

II. If there be any indiviſible part of matter, the ſhape of it muſt be ſpherical, or a perfect globe, wherein every part of the ſurface is equally diſtant from the centre; for if you ſuppoſe it of any other ſhape, then ſome parts of it will be farther from its centre than other parts; and all theſe longer parts may be ſhortened or pared off till every part be equally ſhort, or equally diſtant from the centre; that is, till it be reduced to a globe. Now from the centre of this little globe to the ſurface, the parts of it are but half ſo long as from any part of the ſurface to its oppoſite part; and therefore this globe may be ſtill divided into two hemiſpheres or ſemicircles, which are not the ſmalleſt parts of matter that can be, becauſe they are not of a ſpherical figure as in the beginning of the argument.

And then by a repetition of the ſame reaſoning, thoſe little ſemicircles or half-globes, by paring of the parts which are fartheſt from their centre, may be reduced to ſmaller globes again, and thoſe ſmaller globes again divided in halves as before: there is no end of theſe diviſions, and therefore matter is infinitely diviſible.

To carry on this argument yet further, to the ſurpriſe of my unlearned readers; let us take notice, that all matter has three dimenſions in it, namely, length, breadth, and depth: now every part of matter, every grain of ſand, is infinitely diviſible as to each of theſe

dimenſions; that is, every part which reſults from an infinite diviſion of the length of it, may be yet again infinitely divided according to its breadth; thus the diviſion of this grain of ſand, becomes infinitely infinite. And yet ſtill it may be further infinitely divided, according to the depth or thickneſs of it: thus the diviſibility of matter ſwells beyond all imagination, and is more than infinitely infinite, and that with reſiſtleſs evidence and aſtoniſhment to the eye of reaſon.

Go now, vain man, and find fault with any part of the creation of God, and play the fooliſh critic on his works of providence; go and cenſure the juſtice of his conduct towards *Adam* or any of his children, or blame the wiſdom of his inſtitutions in the diſpenſations of his grace: monſtrous arrogance, and proud impiety! Rather go firſt and learn what an atom is, or the meaneſt part of the duſt of this vaſt creation which God has made. It has ſomething of infinity in it; it confounds thee in perplexing darkneſs, and reaches far beyond all the little ſtretch of thy boaſted powers of reaſoning. Be dumb in ſilence, O vain creature! at the foot of this infinite and eternal Being, nor pretend to meaſure his ſteps, to cenſure his motions, and direct his conduct, till thou art better able to give an account of the duſt which he has put under the feet of the meaneſt of his ſlaves.

XIV. *The Diamond painted.*

HOW wide and unhappy a miſtake it is, when Chriſtians endeavour to adorn their *pure divine worſhip*, by the mixture of it with *ceremonies* of *human invention*. The ſymbolical ordinances of the goſpel have a noble ſimplicity in them: their *materials* are *water*, *bread* and *wine*, three of the moſt neceſſary and valuable things in human life; and their *myſtic ſenſe* is plain, natural, and eaſy. By *water* we are cleanſed when we have been defiled; ſo by the *grace* of the

holy Spirit we are purified from ſin, which pollutes our ſouls in the ſight of God. By *bread* we are fed when we are hungry, and nouriſhed into ſtrength for ſervice: by *wine* we are refreſhed and revived when thirſty and fainting; ſo from the *body of Chriſt* which was broken as an atoning ſacrifice, and his blood which was poured out for us, we derive our ſpiritual life and ſtrength. The application of theſe ſymbols is moſt ſimple, and natural alſo: we are commanded to *waſh* with the water, to *eat* the bread, and to *drink* the wine: moſt proper repreſentations of our participation of theſe benefits.

Thus much of figures and emblems did the all-wiſe God think proper to appoint and continue in his church, when he brake the yokes of *Jewiſh* bondage, and aboliſhed a multitude of rites and ceremonies of his own ancient appointment. How plain, how natural, how glorious, how divine are theſe two *Chriſtian* inſtitutions, *Baptiſm* and the *Lord's Supper*, if ſurveyed and practiſed in their original ſimplicity! but they are debaſed by the addition of any fantaſtic ornaments.

What think ye of all the gaudy trappings and golden finery that is mingled with the *Chriſtian* worſhip, by the imaginations of men in the church of *Rome*? Are they not like ſo many ſpots and blemiſhes caſt upon a fair jewel by ſome fooliſh painter? Let the colours be ever ſo ſprightly and glowing, and the luſtre of the paint ever ſo rich, yet if you place them on a diamond they are ſpots and blemiſhes ſtill. Is not this a juſt emblem to repreſent all the gay airs, and rich and glittering accoutrements wherewith the church of *Rome* hath ſurrounded her devotions and her public religion?

The reformers of our worſhip in the *Church of England* were much of this mind, for they boldly paſs this cenſure on many of the *Popiſh* ceremonies, that *they entered into the church by indiſcreet devotion and zeal without knowledge: they blinded the people, and obſcured the glory of God, and are worthy to be cut away and clean rejected:*

that they did *more confound and darken, than declare and ſet forth Chriſt's benefits unto us*, and reduced us again to a *ceremonial law, like that of Moſes*, and to *the bondage of figures and ſhadows:* this is their ſentence and judgment concerning many of the *Romiſh* rites, in the *preface* to the book of *Common Prayer*. Happy had it been for *Great Britain*, if they had thought ſo concerning all of them, ſince they had all the ſame or a worſe original, and they all tend to the ſame unhappy end! However, let others take their liberty of colouring all their jewels with what greens, and purples, and ſcarlets they pleaſe; but for my own part, I like a diamond beſt that has no paint upon it.

XV. *Bills of Exchange.* 1705.

WHEN a rich merchant, who dwells in a foreign land afar off, commits his treaſure to the hands of a banker, it is to be drawn out in ſmaller ſums by his ſervants or his friends here at home, as their neceſſities ſhall require; and he furniſhes them with bills of exchange drawn upon his banker or treaſurer, which are paid honourably to the perſon who offers the bill, according to the time when the words of the bill appoint the payment.

Is it not poſſible to draw a beautiful allegory hence, to repreſent the conduct of the bleſſed God in his promiſes of grace, without debaſing ſo divine a ſubject?

God the Father, the ſpring and fountain of all grace, dwells in regions of light and holineſs inacceſſible, too far off for us to converſe with him or receive ſupplies from him in an immediate way; but he has ſent his Son to dwell in human nature, and conſtituted him Treaſurer of all his bleſſings, that we might derive perpetual ſupplies from his hand: he has intruſted him with all the riches of grace and glory; he has laid up infinite ſtores of love, wiſdom, ſtrength, pardon, peace, and conſolation, in the hands of his Son for this very purpoſe, to be drawn out thence as faſt as the neceſſi-

ties of his saints require. *It pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell. He has received gifts for men.* Col. i. 19. Psal. lxviii. 18.

Now all the promises in the Bible, are so many *bills of exchange* drawn by God the Father in heaven, upon his Son *Jesus Christ*, and payable to every pious bearer; that is, to every one that comes to the mercy-seat, and offers the promise for acceptance, and pleads it in a way of obedient faith and prayer. *Jesus*, the High-treasurer of heaven, knows every letter of his Father's hand-writing, and can never be imposed upon by a forged note; he will ever put due honour upon his Father's bills; he accepts them all, for *all the promises in him are yea, and in him amen.* In him they are all sure *to the glory of the Father*, 2 Cor. i. 20. It is for the Father's honour that his bills never fail of acceptance and payment.

If you apply to the blessed *Jesus*, and offer him a bill of the largest sum, a promise of the biggest blessings, he will never say, "I have not so much of my "Father's treasure in my hand. For he has received "all things." *John* iii. 35. *The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand.* And may I not venture to say, this whole treasure is made over to the saints, *All things are yours*, 1 Cor. iii. 22. And they are parcelled out into bills of promise, and notes under the Father's hand. So the whole treasure of a nation sometimes consists in credit and in promissory notes, more than in present sums of gold and silver.

Some of these divine bills are payable at sight, and we receive the sum as soon as we offer the bill; (viz.) those that must supply our present wants; such as, *Call upon me* IN THE DAY *of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me*, Psal. l. 15. and there have been many examples of such speedy payment. *Psal.* cviii. 3. IN THE DAY *when I cried thou answeredst me; and strengthenedst me with strength in my soul.*

Some are only payable in general at a distant time, and that is left to the discretion of *Christ* the Treasurer. (viz.) *As thy day is, so thy strength shall be*, Deut.

xxxiii. 25. And we need never fear truſting him long, for this bank in the hands of *Chriſt* can never fail; *For in him dwelleth all the fulneſs of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. and Epheſ. iii. 8. we are told of *the unſearchable riches of Chriſt*.

Sometimes *Chriſt* may put us off with a general kind anſwer, or give us a note under his hand, payable at demand, in ſeveral parcels inſtead of a full payment all at once: thus he dealt with his dear friend and ſervant *Paul*, in 2 *Cor.* xii. 9. Doubtleſs *Paul* in his ſeeking the Lord thrice, for the removal of his thorn in the fleſh, had pleaded ſeveral large promiſes of God, had offered thoſe divine bills to *Chriſt* for acceptance and payment; but inſtead of this, our Lord gives him a note under his own hand, which ran in this language, *My grace is ſufficient for thee.* And if we had but the faith which that bleſſed apoſtle had, we might live upon this hope; this would be as good as preſent payment: for if he delay to give the full ſum, it is only becauſe he ſees we have not need of it at preſent: he knows our neceſſities better than we ourſelves; he will not truſt us with too much at once in our hands; but he pays us thoſe bills when he ſees the fitteſt time, and we have often found it ſo, and confeſſed his faithfulneſs.

At other times he pays us, but not in the ſame *kind* of mercy which is mentioned in the *promiſe*, yet in ſomething more uſeful and valuable. If the promiſe mentions *a temporal bleſſing*, he may give us a *ſpiritual* one; if it expreſs *eaſe*, he may give *patience:* and thus his Father's bills are always honoured, and we have no reaſon to complain. So the banker may diſcharge a bill of a hundred pound, not with money, but with ſuch goods and merchandize as may yield us two hundred, and we gladly confeſs the bill is well paid.

Some of theſe promiſes, theſe bills of heavenly treaſure, are not made payable till the hour of our death, as, *Bleſſed are thoſe ſervants whom, when the Lord comes, he ſhall find watching*, &c. Luke xii. 37. *He that endureth to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved*, Matth. xxiv. 13.

Be thou faithful to the death, and I will give thee a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10.

Others are not due till the day of the reſurrection; as, *Them who ſleep in Jeſus will God bring with him*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 14. *I will redeem them from death*, Hoſ. xiii. 14. Col. iii. 4. *When Chriſt who is our life ſhall appear, then ſhall ye alſo appear with him in glory.* Phil. iii. 20, 21. *He ſhall change our vile body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body.* 1 Peter, v. 1. 4. *And when the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, ye ſhall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.*

Now when the great day ſhall come, in which our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* ſhall give up his mediatorial kingdom to the Father, and render an account of all his ſtewardſhip, how fair will his books appear! how juſt a balance will ſtand at the foot of all his accounts! Then ſhall he ſhew in what manner he has fulfilled the promiſes to the ſaints, and preſent to the Father all the bills that he has received and diſcharged; while all the ſaints ſhall with one voice atteſt it, to the honour of the High-treaſurer of heaven, that he has not failed in payment even to the ſmalleſt farthing.

XVI. *The Saints unknown in this World.*

OUT of the millions of mankind that ſpread over the earth in every age, the great God has been pleaſed to take ſome into his own family, has given them a heavenly and divine nature, and made them his ſons and his daughters. But he has ſet no outward mark of glory upon them; there is nothing in their figure or in their countenance, to diſtinguiſh them from the rabble of mankind. And it is fit that they ſhould be in ſome meaſure unknown among their fellow mortals: their character and dignity is too ſacred and ſublime to be made public here on earth, where the circumſtances that attend them are generally ſo mean and deſpicable. Divine wiſdom has appointed the other world for the place of their full diſcovery;

there they ſhall appear like themſelves, in ſtate, equipage, and array, becoming the children of God and heirs of heaven.

Their bleſſed Lord himſelf, who is God's firſt-born Son, was a mere ſtranger and unknown amongſt men; he laid aſide the rays of divinity and *the form of a God*, when he came down to dwell with men, and he *took upon him the form of a ſervant*. He wore no divine majeſty on his face, no ſparks of Godhead beaming from his eyes, no glaring evidence of his high dignity in all his outward appearance. *Therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not*. But he ſhall be known and adored when he comes *in the glory of his Father*, with legions of angels; and *we know that when he ſhall appear, we ſhall be like him*. The life of the ſaints *is hidden with Chriſt in God: but when Chriſt, who is their life, ſhall appear, they alſo ſhall appear with him in glory*. 1 John iii. 1, 2. Col. iii. 3, 4. In that day they ſhall ſtand forth before the whole creation in fair evidence, they ſhall ſhine in diſtinguiſhed light, and appear veſted in their own undoubted honours. But here it ſeems proper there ſhould be ſomething of a cloud upon them, both upon the account of the men of this world, and upon their own account too, as well as in conformity to *Chriſt Jeſus* their Lord.

Firſt, *Upon their own account*, becauſe the preſent ſtate of a Chriſtian is a ſtate of trial. We are not to *walk by ſight* as the ſaints above and angels do; they know they are poſſeſſed of life and bleſſedneſs, for they ſee *God* himſelf near them, *Chriſt* in the midſt of them, and *glory* all around them. Our work is to *live by faith*, and therefore God has not made either his love to us, or his grace in us ſo obvious and apparent to ourſelves, as that every Chriſtian, even the weak and the unwatchful, ſhould be fully aſſured of his ſalvation. He has not appointed the principle of life within us, to ſparkle in ſo divine a manner, as to be always ſelf-evident to the beſt of Chriſtians, much leſs to the lukewarm and the backſlider. It is fit that it ſhould not be too ſenſibly manifeſt, becauſe it is ſo ſenſibly im-

perfect, that we might *examine ourselves whether we are in the faith, and prove ourselves*, whether *Christ*, as a principle of life, *dwell in us*, or no. 2 *Cor.* xiii. 5. While so many snares and sins and dangers attend us, and mingle with our spiritual life, there will be something of darkness ready to rise and obscure it, that so we may maintain a holy jealousy and solicitude about our own state, that we may search with diligence to find whether we have divine life or no, and be called and urged often to look inwards.

This degree of remaining darkness, and the doubtful state of a slothful Christian, is sometimes of great use to spur him onward in his race of holiness, and quicken him to aspire after the highest measures of the spiritual life; that when its acts are more vigorous, it may shine with the brightest evidence, and give the soul of the believer full satisfaction and joy. It serves also to awaken the drowsy Christian to keep a holy watch over his heart and practice, lest sin and temptation make a foul inroad upon his divine life, spread still a thicker cloud over his best hopes, and break the peace of his conscience. Though the principle of grace be not always self-evident, yet we are required *to give diligence, to make and to keep it sure.* 2 Pet. i. 10.

And as it was proper that every little seed of grace should not shine with self-sufficient and constant evidence, *on the account of the Christian himself*, so, *secondly*, it was fit that their state and dignity should not be *too obvious to the men of the world*, that they might *neither adore* nor *destroy the saints*. A principle of *superstition* might tempt *some* weaker souls, to pay extravagant honours to the Christian, if he carried heaven in his face, and it were visible in his countenance that he was a son of God. *On the other hand*, the *malicious* and *perverse* part of mankind might imitate the rage of *Satan*, and attempt the sooner to destroy the saint.

This was the case of the blessed *Paul*. When he had wrought a miracle at *Lystra*, and appeared with something divine about him, when he had healed the cripple by a mere word of command, the people cried

out with exalted voices, *The gods are come down to us in the likeneſs of men.* Immediately they made a *Mercury* of St. *Paul*, they turned *Barnabas* into *Jupiter*, and the *prieſt brought oxen and garlands to the gates to have done ſacrifice to them:* this was the humour of the *ſuperſtitious Gentiles.* But in ſeveral of the *Jews*, their *malice* and *envy* wrought a very different effect; for they *perſuaded the people* into fury, ſo that *they ſtoned* the bleſſed apoſtle, and *drew him out of the city for dead.* Acts xiv.

Thus it fared with our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* himſelf in the days of his fleſh. For the moſt part he lived unknown among men, *he did not cry nor make his voice to be heard in the ſtreets:* but when he diſcovered himſelf to them on any ſpecial occaſion, the people ran into different extremes. When the characters of the *Meſſiah* appeared with evidence upon him, they would have raiſed him to a throne, and made an earthly *king of him.* John vi. 15. At another time, when his holy conduct did not ſuit their humour, they were *filled with wrath*, and *led him to the brow of a hill to caſt him down headlong.* Luke iv. 29. Therefore our bleſſed Lord did not walk through the ſtreets and tell the world he was the *Meſſiah;* but by degrees he let the characters of his miſſion appear upon him, and diſcovered himſelf in wiſdom, as his diſciples and the world could bear it, and as the Father had appointed.

Let us imitate our bleſſed Lord, and copy after ſo divine a pattern; let our works bear a bright and growing witneſs to our inward and real Chriſtianity. This is ſuch a gentle ſort of evidence, that though it may work conviction in the hearts of ſpectators, yet it does not ſtrike the ſenſe with ſo glaring a light as to dazzle the weaker ſort who behold it into ſuperſtitious folly; nor does it give ſuch provocation to the envy of the malicious, as if the ſaints had borne the ſign of their high dignity in ſome more ſurpriſing manner in their figure or countenance.

I might add alſo, There is ſomething in this ſort of evidence of their ſainthip, that carries more true

honour in it, than if ſome heavenly name had been written in their forehead, or their ſkin had ſhone like the face of *Moſes* when he came down from the mount. It is a more ſublime glory for a prince to be found amongſt the vulgar in undiſtinguiſhed raiment, and by his ſuperior conduct and ſhining virtues to force the world to confeſs that *He is the ſon of a king*, than to walk through the rabble with enſigns of royalty, and demand honour from them by the mere blaze of his ornaments.

XVII. *Praiſe waiteth for thee, O God, in Sion.*

Pſalm lxv. 1.

AND does praiſe wait for God in the congregation of his ſaints? Surely it doth not uſe to be ſo. Mercy uſes to be beforehand with us, and the *Lord waiteth to be gracious.* Mercy is wont to be ready in the hands of God, before praiſe is ready on the tongues of men; and we are ſure he waited on us to ſhew his grace, long before we had any ſongs ready for him, or any thought of praiſing him.

Yet ſometimes it is ſo in this lower world. Holy ſouls may be waiting at the throne of grace, with their praiſes ready to aſcend as ſoon as mercy appears: mercy may be ſilent for a ſeaſon, and then praiſe for a ſeaſon is ſilent too. This is the original language of the pſalm, and this the ſtate of things, when the pſalmiſt wrote; *Praiſe is ſilent for thee, in* Zion. When the church of God under trouble has been long ſeeking any particular bleſſing or deliverance, and God's appointed hour of ſalvation is not yet come, then the ſongs of the church are ſilent: Yet ſhe ſtands watching and waiting for the deſired moment, that ſhe may meet the ſalvation with praiſe.

But why ſhould God ſuffer praiſe to be ſilent at all in *Zion?* Is not the church the habitation of his praiſes? Yes, but it is the houſe of prayer too: prayer

and patience muſt have their proper exerciſe. If praiſe were never ſilent on earth, where would there be any room for prayer to ſpeak? When would there be any ſeaſon for the grace of patience to ſhew itſelf? God loves prayer as well as praiſe: his ſovereignty is honoured by humble waiting, as well as his goodneſs by holy gratitude and joy. If praiſe be ſilent, then let prayer be more fervent. The abſent Saviour loves to hear the voice of his beloved; the lips of the church muſt never be quite ſilent, though they are not always employed in hallelujahs.

Praiſe is the ſweeteſt part of divine worſhip; it is a ſhort heaven here on earth. God lets our praiſes be ſilent ſometimes, to teach us that this is not a ſtate of complete bleſſedneſs. After the great day of deciſion, praiſe ſhall be continual and unceaſing, when there ſhall be no more ſighing for the ſaints, no more death, no more pain. Then churches ſhall want ordinances no more, nor ſaints abſtain from the bread of life. *Jeſus* their everlaſting Paſtor ſhall feed them, in paſtures ever green, and from the tree of life, and lead them to the fountains of joy and the ſtreams where eternal pleaſures run. O may our ſouls wait with joyful hope for that day! and our praiſes ſhall not be ſilent.

Yet it is not with the church as it is with the world, when praiſe is ſilent in both. It is ever ſilent among the wicked, becauſe they are forgetful of God their Maker; it is only ſilent among the ſaints for a ſeaſon, when their God ſeems to frown and hide himſelf, and (as it were) to forget his people.

Beſides, Let us conſider that all praiſe is not ſilent there. Daily incenſe ariſes before God in the temple, though particular thank-offerings wait till particular mercies are received. Praiſe for all the greateſt mercies (*viz.*) for redeeming grace, for electing love, for the ſanctifying Spirit is never ſilent in *Zion*. Pſal. lxxxiv. 4. *Bleſſed are they that dwell in thine houſe: they will be ſtill praiſing thee.* But praiſe for ſome ſpecial favours may be ſilent for a ſeaſon, as well as that large revenue of praiſe that ſhall grow due at the accompliſh-

ment of all the promiſes and the conſummation of bleſſedneſs.

Again, The praiſes of God are ſilent in the world without any deſign of breaking forth; but the ſilence of the church longs to be loſt in joyful ſongs of thankſgiving. It is like an engine charged with praiſe, that wants only the warm touch of mercy to make it ſhine with the glories of heavenly worſhip, and ſound aloud the name of the God of *Zion*.

Sometimes God is as well pleaſed that praiſe ſhould wait with humble ſilence, as that it ſhould ſpeak. It ſhews a well-diſpoſed frame and temper of ſoul, that longs to honour God. The hearts of his ſaints are inſtruments of muſic to the Lord; he has formed their ſouls for his glory, and tuned their heart-ſtrings to his own praiſe. Now he loves to ſee them kept ſtill in tune, though he does not always play his own praiſes upon them; he neither wants our ſervices nor our ſongs, for his own perfections are an everlaſting harmony to himſelf, without the ſlender notes that we can ſound.

We may make this ſweet remark at laſt, that *Zion* on earth, ſhall be joined to *Jeruſalem* above; the family below ſhall be joined to the upper houſe, for they have learnt the work of heaven, their hearts are tuned to praiſe; they want only ſuch harps as angels have, to bring glory down and make a heaven on this earth. In the 1 *Chron.* xi. 4. we are told that *David* took *Zion* from the *Jebuſites*, and built it round about, and added it to *Jeruſalem*. So ſhall *Jeſus* the true *David*, the King of ſaints, take this earthly *Zion* from the powers of this wicked world, and ſhall build and adorn it around with glory and ſtrength, with perfect beauty and complete grace, and add it to the *Jeruſalem* which is above. Look upwards O ſouls who are full of praiſes, and are even impatient to ſpeak the glories of your God, look to *Jeruſalem* above, where praiſe is conſtant and never ceaſing, and rejoice to think that you ſhall be made inhabitants of that city, and united to the glorious church! It is your chief pleaſure here to